

**JIMMA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW**

**DEPARTMENT OF OROMO FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE**

**INDIGENOUS NORM ENFORCING MECHANISMS OF THE**

**OROMO: THE CASE OF '*QUCAA*','*MANA KORSIISUU*' AND**

***'BARBADEESSUU'* AMONG THE ARSII**

**BY: AYEHU BACHA TESO**

**MAY 2014**

**JIMMA**

**Indigenous Norm Enforcing Mechanisms of the Oromo: The  
Case of 'Qucaa', 'Mana Korsiiisuu' and 'Barbadeessuu' among  
the Arsii**

**A Thesis Presented To The Department Of Oromo Folklore  
And Literature In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements  
For The Degree Of Master Of Arts In Oromo Folklore And  
Cultural Studies**

**BY: Ayehu Bacha Teso**

**Avisor: Dejene Gemechu (PhD)**

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**Among the Arsii**

**BY: Ayehu Bacha Teso**

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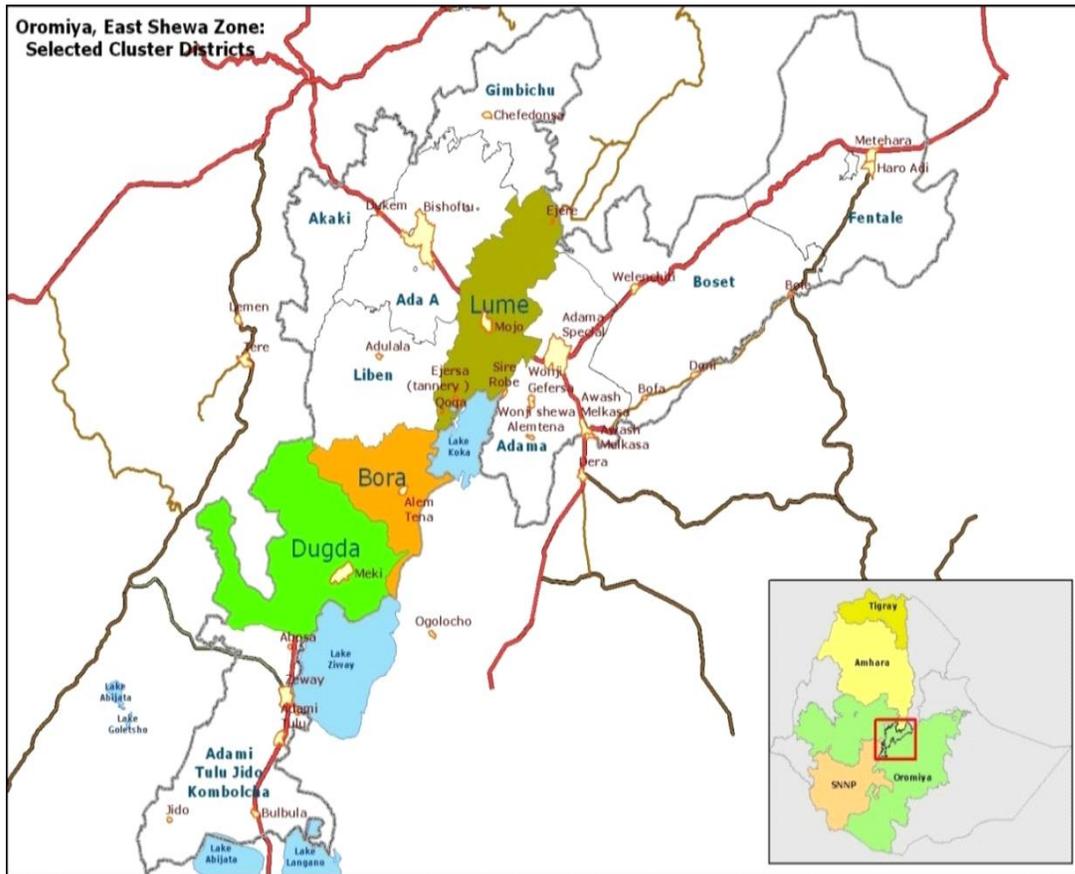
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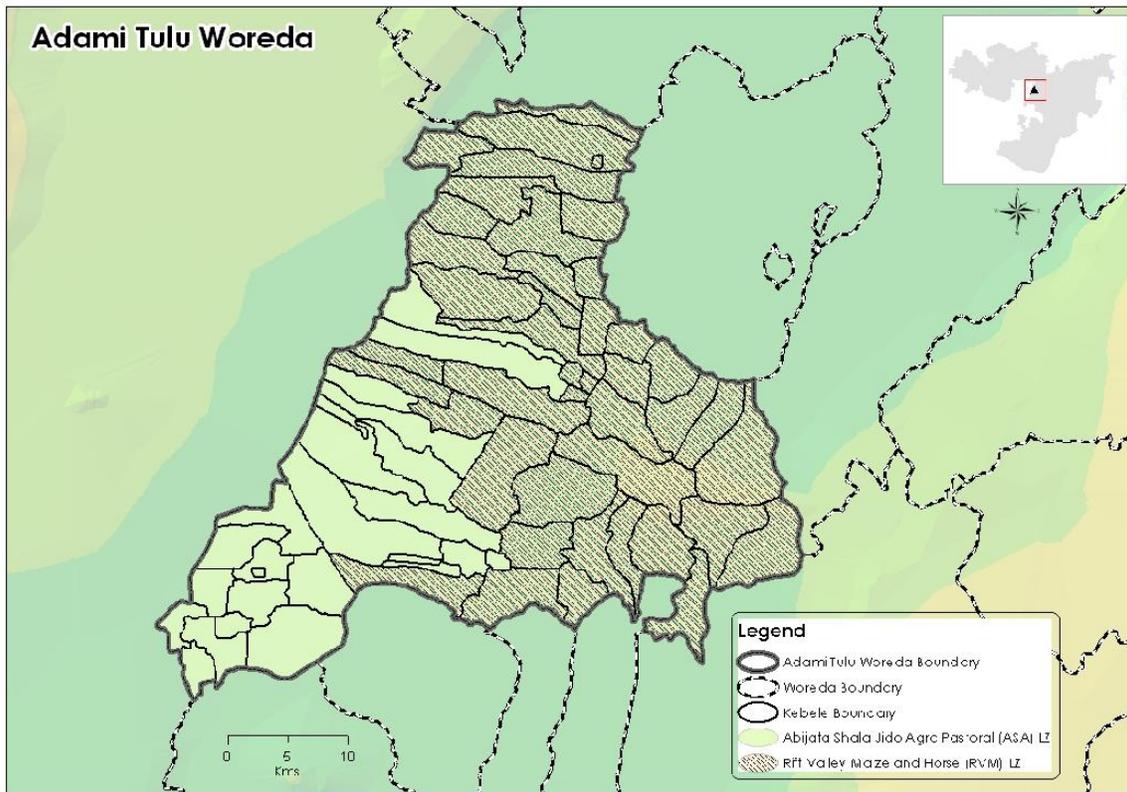
Although I have recognized the cooperation of some people and institutions by name, it is not complete. As a result, I show my gratitude to individuals who have contributed for the successfulness of this thesis directly or indirectly.

**Map 1: East Shoa Zone Administrative Map**



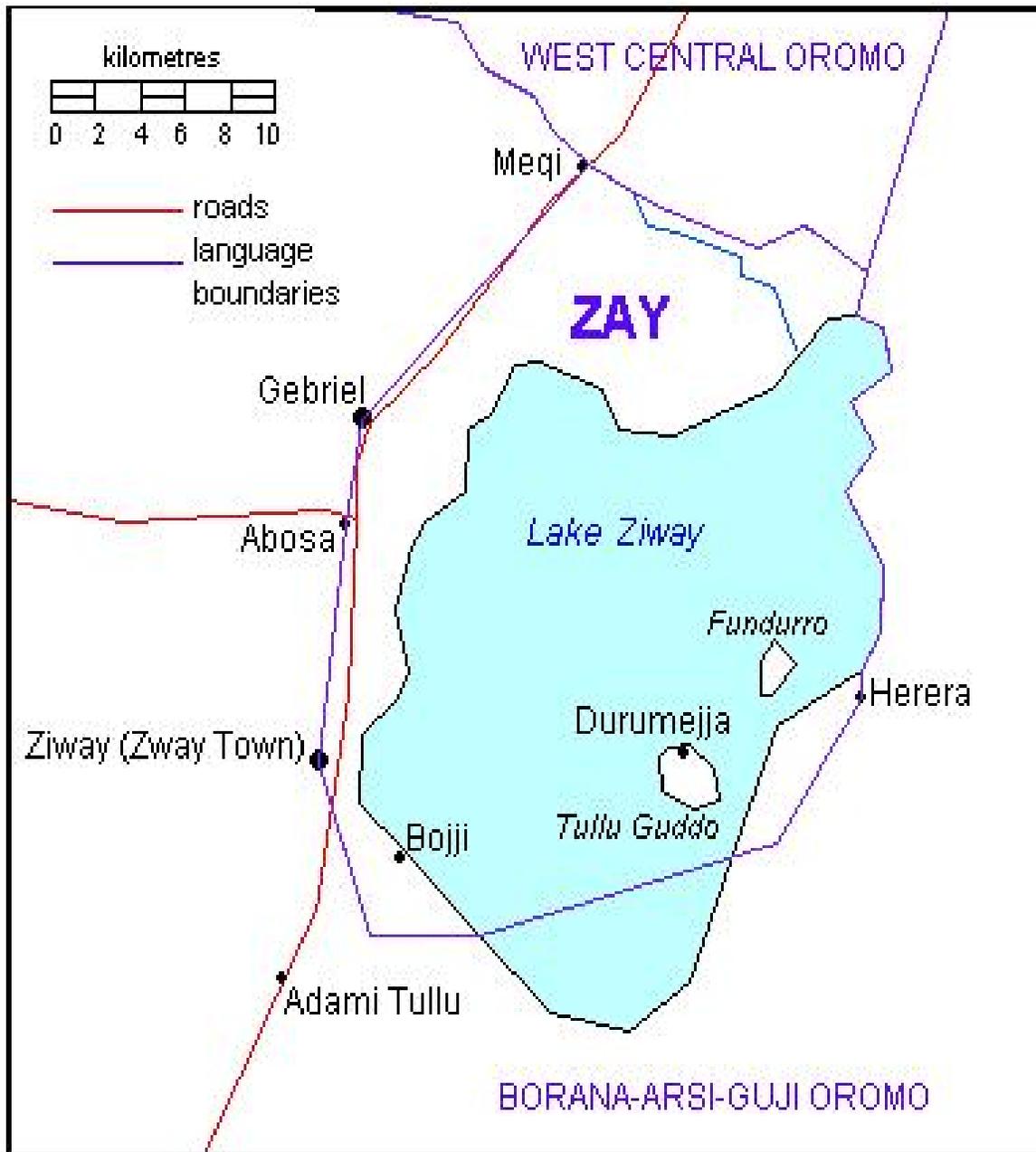
Map: By Azage Tegegne and Nigatu Alemayehu, 2013

**Map 2: Map of Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa District**



Map: by Oromia Livelihood Zone Reports

**Map 3: Map of Lake Dambal and Surrounding Area**



Map: by Linda Jordan, Jillian Netzley and Hussein Mohammed

### Transliteration System

1. Short sounds stand for single vowel (as in *mana*) while long sounds are represented with double vowels (as in *raaguu*).
2. Oromo consonantal phonemes are gemminated by doubling the phonemes (as in *gubbaa*).
3. Velar, voiceless, ejective sound is represented with 'q'(as in *qaanqee*)
4. Alveolar, voiceless and ejective sound is represented with 'x' (as in *xaaxa'uu*)
5. 'c' stands for palatal, voiceless and ejective sound. E.g.: *caaccuu*
6. “'” represents glotal voiceless stop sound as in *taa'uu*
7. ch - palatal, affricate, voiceless e.g.: *dachaa*
8. dh - alveolar, implosive e.g.: *daadhii*
9. ny - palatal, nasal e.g.: *nyaara*
10. ph - bilabial, voiceless, and ejective e.g.: *salphina*
11. sh - palatal fricative voiceless e.g.: *bishaan*

## Glossary

*Abbaa Bokkuu*- holder of scepter, Abbaa Gadaa or a principal person of *Gadaa* system

*Aantee* - close kin

*Ayyaana*- fortune, spirit

*Baalabbat*-is government appointed officials/local governor during past aristocracy system of Ethiopia

*Balbala*- door

*Ekeraa*-spirit or ghost of somebody or something died

*Gaadii*-a type of rope/skin used to tie the legs of the cow during milking, so that it does not move and disturb the milkers.

*Gudeeda*-groin

*Haraamuu*- incest, sexual relationship between relatives

*Itillee*- hide made for sleeping on

*Kobaa*- a man who has made sexual relationship with an immediate family, impure

*Korboo*- a wheel made from flexible plants by children which is thrown in any direction to practice the skill of hunting and war

*Luba*- generation set, membership in *gogeessa*

*Mana* -sub-lineage

*Qixxee*-Conflict resolution mechanism involving sanctions on backsliders

*Shabbeena*-widely known as *alangaa* is made from the skin of hippopotamus

*Siiqqee*- ritual stick used by married woman

*Soodduu*- tree planted on graveyards of deceased parents by their daughters

*Waaqa*- a supreme being who is omniscient, omnipresent and omniscient and believed to  
be a creator of all nature, God in Oromo

*Waaqeffannaa*- a belief in *Waaqa*, creator

## ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is investigating indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms of the Oromo with special emphasis on *qucaa mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu*. To this effect, various methods like interview and focus group discussion by which knowledgeable elders were accessed were employed to come across varied and deep information.

The Oromo have developed various indigenous mechanisms to enforce norms in order to maintain peace and order each of which work hand in hand with *Gadaa* system. *Gadaa* system in Oromo in turn clearly defines the whole gamut of relationships by which human interactions are framed. The daily livelihood, mode of subsistence marriage customs, cultural institutions and genealogy of Arsii Oromo therefore needs to be addressed before dealing with these mechanisms of peace maintenance. Similarly social structure of Arsii Oromo plays a pivotal role in identifying, executing and integrating the offenders. All norm enforcing mechanisms (physical punishments in this case) have their own process and ritual of re-integration.

Norms vary from culture to culture; the mechanisms of enforcing them too are diversified. Severe physical punishments are carried out after repeated trial of correcting the behavior of the wrongdoers. These harsh chastisements are concluded by rituals of re-integration by which offenders are believed to be harmonious with the entire society as well as the creator. In general the study has shown that if politely harnessed and modified these mechanisms are helpful in bringing peace which is the base for the survival of the community members.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is broken into different themes. Accordingly, chapter one deals with introduction of the research by stressing on identifying the research gap of this thesis that is the overlooked aspect of norm enforcing mechanisms of the Oromo particularly *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu*. Similarly, objectives intended, methodology and methods employed to collect and analyze data as well as ethical considerations are focused.

The second part of this chapter examines theoretical frameworks in which the current thesis may fit into and consultation of related literature. It reviews the available literatures to support the thesis or to show point of differences. On the other hand, it stresses assessing the existing theoretical frameworks to evaluate whether the present study can fit into the accessible theories or needs another framework to be developed.

The third chapter focuses on elaborating the socio-economic background of the study area by enlightening social, political, economic and natural setting of the area. For that reason, environmental, human and cultural elements of the study population are emphasized to highlight the context in which norm enforcing mechanisms take place.

The fourth and the main body' of this thesis presents indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms of the Oromo in general and *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu* in particular by taking the example of Arsii Oromo. To this effect, the procedures of these rituals with their symbolic interpretation, main social actors in the implementation, the ritual of reintegration as well as current status of these mechanisms and continuities and changes observed are thoroughly elaborated.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The Oromo people have inhabited the horn of Africa from time immemorial and are indigenous to Africa. The majority of Oromo reside in scattered homesteads. And the basic unit is the patrilineal extended nuclear family unit. Next to the family are *fira* (relatives), *ollaa* (neighbors), *balbala* or *qomoo* (lineage), *ganda* (community) and *gosa* (clan) are important social networks. These entire social groups act as the corporate identity; that is, as a collective image in which all the members share common interests and values. The lineage groups not only work to bring about the welfare of the society and locate Oromo with respect to one another but also to take action as corporate bodies so as to protect the collective interests and benefits of the society. They are agents of social, cultural and moral control over their members (Eshete, 2012:57; Legesse, 1973: 37-42; Knutsson, 1967; Dejene, 2007; Kelly, 1992: 40-63)

Among the Oromo, every day activities are guided by *Gadaa* laws which are proclaimed every eight years. *Gadaa* assembly sets rule by which deviant behaviors are punished. And this has been used to maintain wellbeing of the community. Baxter et.al, (1996:154) backs this idea as follows:

Borana customary law is characterized by a relatively large number of juridical sanctions. Sometimes, the text of an oral rule contains the proper sanction to be applied in the case of law breaking. The juridical practice of the Borana seems to aim at the restoration of good relations rather than at the punishment of an offender.

In Oromo accordingly, there are three types of chastisements. The first one is physical by which wrong doers are penalized bodily. '*Qucaa* (beating/killing/burying)', '*mana korsiiisuu*', '*barbadeessuu* (destroying)', '*ulee gosaa* (stick of clan)', and '*itti deemsisuu*' are good examples of this type. The second type is psychological punishment by which offenders are penalized psychosomatically by using methods like '*muukessuu*', infamy, ostracism, disgrace and dislike. The third one is payment of blood price. In *Oromoo*, if a man slays his fellow, he has to pay the necessary compensation for the blood shed to resolve the confrontation peacefully and to prevent any prospective intent of revenge.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

For human beings to survive as a group there ought to be a commonly held view by which members are governed. When social norms overrule individual interests, each member of the society strives forward to accomplish societal needs (Posner and Rasmusen, 1999; Falkinger, 2004). To put differently, society designed these norms for the common interest of its individual members for the fact that individual rights do not surpass communal interest. Individual right can be taken as one of the Westerner's culture of individualization while group is a relevant unit of analysis among the Oromo.

To say differently, communal spirits take priority; hence, the rights and fortune of the individual are seen as an essential part of the organic whole. But it is never possible to say that collective interests are executed at the expense of individual rights for the fact that *Gadaa* system keeps the equilibrium of both rights. Such norms have long term effects and advantages for the community.

It is lucid that norms and means of enforcing cultural norms vary across culture since they are underpinned by the worldview of each society. Customary laws are embedded in the culture and values of society; they govern acceptable standards of behavior and are actively enforced by members of the community; they are peculiar to the specific cultures from which they are flourished. People's beliefs and their behavior coincide for the reason that norms entail a set of corresponding beliefs.

Even though they can be a source of law and can reasonably complete the formal one, many cultural norm enforcing mechanisms are downplayed in favor of formal decisions. This is because the extent to which national legal systems recognize customary law largely depend on the political intention of the implementing government i.e. the knowledge might not be generalized to other cultural context. However, indigenous norm enforcements are efficient tool of maintaining social standards (Cialdini and Trost, 2004; Piskorski and Gorbatai, 2013).

On the other hand, a synthesis of cultural and constitutional system of norm enforcements may facilitate sustainable peace that will lead to improved social order. The government fails to appreciate, collaborate and complement the traditional methods of resolving conflicts. Limited understanding of the role played by the *Gadaa* system by the state has diminished the efficacy and relevance of this customary institution in conflict management (Desalegn et.al, 2005:29).

Despite the ignorance and less attention given, traditional justice system in general and norm enforcing mechanisms have survived until today. Informal norm enforcing methods are a feasible solution for deviation from cultural norms. Culturally deep rooted enforcement of norms are effective for a belief in supernatural being plays an imperative role in local people's conformity to social norms (Knutsson, 1967; Lewis, 1965).

In our day, we see a contradiction between the contemplation of human right advocates sermonizing some cultural practices as awkward and the notion of respecting indigenous customary practices for the reason that they are part and parcel of nation's inalienable right. For instance, *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu*, *barbadeessuu*, *gumaa*, and many others are pillars of Oromo cultural norms. They maintain harmonious relationship between human beings which is invoked in every ritual, blessing, prayer, political deliberations and every day interaction. They are the way of protecting *waaqa's seera* and *safuu*.

*Qucaa*, *Mana Korsiiisuu* and *Barbadeessuu* which are the pillars of Arsii Oromo indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms is not yet studied. *Qucaa* and *Mana Korsiiisuu* were touched by Huseen Badhaasoo (2000); nonetheless, since the main purpose of his work was Arsii Oromo marriage customs he was unable to cover all essential rituals. Similarly, Dejene (2007) has touched the topic especially confiscation as a means of punishing backsliders though his work was heavily emphasized on *Gumaa*.

On the other hand, previous researches were dominated by an interest in describing the ineffectiveness and/or even absence of indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms. Many scholars held the view that traditional African societies do not have law enforcing

mechanisms. Knutson, 1967; Gluckman, 1956; Ember Carol and Melvin Ember, 1977 as quoted in Dejene (2007) repetitively said that traditional authorities lack coercive force to support their decision. Evans-Pritchard (1940), Gluckman (1956), Ember and Ember (1977) as quoted in Dejene (2007), contend that these traditional agents lack coercive force to support their decisions. On the other hand, Dejene (2007) has elucidated a variety of ways by which customary decisions are enforced and portrayed that the Oromo society have many effective norm enforcing mechanisms especially in the context of *jaarsummaa*, *qaaalluu* and *gumaa* though he did not give attention to the current topic. Therefore, the empirical research undertaken adds information on this perplexity. Generally, the present study is aimed at filling the above mentioned gaps.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- What are the role of *qucaa*, *mana korsisuu* and *barbadeessuu* in ensuring sustainable peace in Arsii Oromo?
- What are the procedures involved and meanings attached to actions in norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo?
- What happens to anyone who does not act and behave in accordance with *safuu* among the Arsii Oromo?
- What are the social functions of norm enforcing mechanisms among the Arsii Oromo?
- Who are the main actors in norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo?
- What are the change and continuities observed in norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo?

### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this ethnographic research is to reveal indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- Explaining the role of *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu* in ensuring sustainable peace in Arsii Oromo
- Describing the procedures involved and meanings attached to actions in norm enforcing mechanisms of Arsii Oromo
- Revealing the consequence of mistreating social norms among the Arsii Oromo
- Elaborating the social functions of norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo
- Disclosing the main actors in norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo
- Elucidating the change and continuities observed in norm enforcing mechanisms of the Arsii Oromo

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research holds much significance from different perspectives for various individuals and institutions. First of all, it will help policy makers to make policies and strategies by considering indigenous knowledge. That means, this research contributes to the understanding of policymakers how these cultural practices can be exploited to ensure sustainable peace. Secondly, the current research project will contribute to the knowledge and study of Oromo. Finally, it will trigger next researchers who want to study related topics.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope identifies the boundaries of the study in term of research participants, geographic location of the study area and time frame of a given research. Research project becomes fruitful when it is limited thematically as well as the place it covers for the reason that it is reasonably difficult to cover all thematic areas and all places at a time. Limiting one research scheme have therefore direct implication on the quality of the work as well.

Accordingly, this research is thematically confined to indigenous norm enforcing mechanisms of the Oromo in general and *Qucaa*, *Mana Korsiiisuu* and *Barbadeessuu* among the Arsii Oromo in particular. At the same time, the research is spatially limited to

Arsii Oromo of *Adaamii Tulluu*, one of the places where these indigenous cultural practices are relatively still alive.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

In almost everything we do there are limitations. The same is true for this research project. Firstly, the site of my study was geographically far from where I currently live. Therefore, it was difficult to cover relevant issues to be researched for such folkloric study because of severe little budget and short time span given for the study. Secondly, to sort out what really happens in a natural setting it needs eye-witnesses and supporting evidence. Researchers have to identify the interrelationship of situation and participants. The process of *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu* was intended to be observed. However, observation was impossible because of various reasons. First of all, the topic under discussion is sporadic in its very nature. On top of that, it is completely forbidden by government for it is considered as against human right. Therefore, other forms of data gathering methods were made best of use.

To assuage these problems, maximum commitment and perseverance was made to use extra time; every opportunity was used to get enough data within this limited time framework to successfully cover essential issues. In spite of all these constraints great effort have been made to successfully cover essential issues, facts and figures related to norm enforcing mechanisms in the area. My knowledge of the language and culture has helped me a lot during my field study. I have attempted to present the information as offered by the informants. However, I have utilized etical perspective too to interpret the implications of symbols, actions and utterances involved in rituals.

### **1.8 Research Methodology**

This research utilized qualitative methodology owing to its exploratory nature that recognizes the importance of locating the research within a particular social, cultural, and historical context. Quantitative methodology has weaknesses in a sense that it is of little

value for examining complex social relationships or intricate patterns of group interaction.

This research seriously took the social construction of these contexts and the identities of participants construct within them. Verbatim transcripts of conversations have been taken by hand and recorded by a tape recorder. That means the whole session has been captured by tape-recorder and video so that nonverbal information, such as body languages, gestures, signs, objects and emotions are not missed. Interview and Focus Group Discussion has been extensively used.

## **1.9 Methods of Data Collection**

### **1.9.1 Interview**

Interview is among the most familiar and crucial strategies for collecting qualitative data. Systematic interviewing has been made with knowledgeable informants from all the subject groups to get all available data. The source of information relevant to the objective was mostly obtained by interviewing the elders of the community. This research was highly dependent on key informant interview with knowledgeable elders who actively involves in the process of constructing, modifying and enforcing norms. By this method, fifteen key informants were consulted.

The researcher got detailed information by using this tool. Data was gathered from the elderly men, elderly women and *Gadaa* leaders (two from each) to investigate local people's view of the supernatural world. Interviewees have been asked to discuss their perception and interpretation on the topic of the study. Semi-structured interview was considerably used because they give my respondents time and opportunities to develop their answers. Continual attention has been paid for respondents to keep them from talking irrelevant and inconsequential ideas. And this method was vital to discover real percepts of individuals on the topic under discussion.

### **1.9.2 Focus Group Discussion**

The reason behind employing this method was to have different thoughts on the same subject since peoples with different experiences have been accommodated in the session. On the other hand, individual's attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum rather by group interaction. This method enabled me to study participants in natural atmosphere. Participants are believed to be more relaxed than a one-to-one interview which enables me to get first hand data. So, this allowed me to learn more about group or community opinions and needs. This method facilitated a wide-ranging exchange of views. Additionally, the researcher believed that human beings are understood through their interaction with others.

Three Focus Group Discussions each of which consists six individuals was carried out based on participant's willingness. Intentional decisions have been made to achieve the best group composition in light of the research questions. They discussed on the issue under discussion together in a way that they have been framed by general questions (semi-structured interview guide) raised by the field worker.

The researcher created a supportive environment, asking focused questions to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view. Participants was freed to talk openly and actively encouraged to express their own opinions and to questions posed by the fieldworker. The group's composition and the group discussion have been carefully planned in a manner that participants feel free to talk openly and give honest opinions. Participants have been arguing each other on some contradictory points; during these times, the opposite ideas were moderated before they change their direction; the researcher accommodated both opposing ideas in his report.

### **1.9.3 Consulting archive**

I have also conducted archival studies in various administrative archives located in different parts of the study area from culture and tourism office, government communication affairs, court and prosecutors of the district. Here I have managed to find

some unpublished information available in the form of minute, petition and decision which are pertinent to the title.

### **1.10 Sources of Data**

This research project primarily depends on first hand data. Secondary sources like brochures, letters, minutes and data gathered on the title by culture and tourism office of the district and other necessary documents pertinent to the topic under discussion has been consulted to support the data gathered from the field.

### **1.11 Sampling Techniques**

#### **1.11.1 Snowball Sampling**

Sampling in cultural studies is not the issue of numerical representation of the study population. Rather it is all about the representativeness of the data generated from conversant individuals on the issue under discussion. In interview and Focus Group Discussion individuals were selected to suggest another eligible person since it was believed that the population knows each other very well. Accordingly, the researcher asked his subjects to propose another person with the same quality so that they will be the next subject until a sufficient number of subjects are accessed.

Appropriate individuals have been consulted and accommodated in interview and Focus Group Discussion session. In the course of all these activities, Culture and Tourism Office of the district has been consulted first to recommend the first appropriate respondent. The first respondent is then asked to make out another potential respondent. The accuracy of this method is evaluated on the spot depending on the data generated from these individuals. The study sites were chosen systematically depending on the availability of knowledgeable elders and accessibility of the site.

### **1.12 Methods of Data Analysis**

The important advantage of qualitative approach is the ability to probe into responses or observations as needed and obtain more detailed descriptions and explanations of experiences, behaviors, and beliefs. It is evident that qualitative data analysis ideally occurs simultaneously during data collection. Data has been transcribed immediately after

field work. Themes were categorized into coherent categories. The data was analyzed qualitatively through descriptive and interpretative method. Finally, the researcher described phenomena from both emic and etic perspectives.

### **1.13 Ethical Considerations**

First of all, written permission was taken from the organization in which the research undertaking or the location in which the data are going to be collected. In the case of interviewing victims of violence, the interview may trigger painful experiences and the participant may become distressed and feel during the interview and observation.

The researcher needs to be aware of sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest. They were told to be under no obligation to do so and that there will be no negative consequences for them if they do not assist the researcher. The respondents' answers were kept confidential and/or anonymous. Their identity was not revealed in any way in the report. Participants of the study were given refreshments to recompense their time. Tangible gifts like mobile cards and soft drinks were used to compensate research participants for the time and effort they devoted for the study.

## Chapter Two: Conceptual Definitions, Theoretical Frameworks and Review of Related Literature

This chapter deals with defining basic concepts, reviewing various literatures associated with the title under discussion and theoretical framework within the proposed title might operate.

### 2.1 Norm: Definitions

In fact it is quite intricate to define and translate the word '*safuu*' for words are deeply cultural. The term connotes different actions and behaviors in different contexts. *Safuu* is the law of *waaqa* which is premeditated to stabilize cosmic order. As a result it has deep religious and moral significance. Since it is originated from the creator, it should be the base of all laws and all laws should be derivative of moral code (*safuu*) in Oromo.

Tena (2009) has shown that there are four different Oromo words referring to morality and social norms. These are: *ceera* (*salfokko*) in Borana, *fokkoo* in Gujii, *maaljennu* in Jimma and *safuu* in majority of the Oromo areas. It seems fair to use the Oromo word *safuu* to refer to morality, since it is used by majority of the Oromo groups.

*Safuu* is a moral category, based on Oromo notions of distance and respect for all things. The concept of *safuu* is not merely an abstract category: it constitutes the ethical basis upon which all human action should be founded; it is that which directs one on the right path; it shows the way in which life can be best lived within the context of Oromo world (Gemechu, 2005: 84).

According to the above assertion, the concept carries the meaning of reverence for both natural and social environment. It is deep rooted in the belief system so that the relationship with *Waaqa*, nature and one another is maintained. So, life becomes harmonious when *safuu* is respected.

The term *safuu* is used in different senses. According to Bartels (1983) and Tena (2009), the term is used to express admiration or surprise, mysterious events, fear and anxiety, distance or respect, the rightness or wrongness of human actions and behaviors. People

say *safuu*! When they do not know the causes of certain event, or when they think that something should not happen happens, or when someone does what he/she ought not to do. It is also used to refer to certain Oromo etiquette (custom).

The above two authors reserved themselves from defining this complex and multifaceted term. They defined the concept in terms of its expressions and context of the usage of the term. This single word therefore represents a wide array of ideas in Oromo worldview.

## **2.2 The Oromo Conception of *Safuu***

The concept of *safuu* among the Oromo is studied by many scholars. The explanations of most of the scholars are nearly the same. Distance, respect and balance are common words defining the word. To put simply, *safuu* govern all aspects Oromo lives.

*Safuu* is an important concept among the Oromo. It is respecting one another and respecting ones' own *ayyaana* and others' *ayyaana*. By *safuu*, culture is maintained and *waaqa* is revered. It is the existence of an attitude compounded of both distance and respect between all things. All things have the place of their own in the cosmic and social order, and that they should keep this balance. Every creature and especially a man has to act according to its own *ayyaana* and to respect the others' *ayyaana*. *Safuu* implies both rights and duties. In the peoples' eyes wisdom is knowing *safuu* and abide by it (Workneh, 2001; Bartles, 1983 and Alemayehu et.al, 2006).

The Oromo believe that everything has an appropriate place in the order of universe; and it exists and functions according to the place and role it is naturally endowed with. If it acts differently, to what it is naturally best fitted for then it becomes unnatural or unlawful-it is against *safuu* (Tena, 2009:172).

Every eight year, when it was the turn of one of the five *Gada* sets to take over the responsibility for their peoples' wellbeing, this group accepted once more ritually the *safuu* from *waga's* hands and proclaimed a new law of *Mako Bili*, their great law giver. The two rites had quite a different character, though they were associated with in time and place. Both of them were in *matchas* eyes, the very bases of their society, given to

them by *waaqa*. The difference between them is that the *safuu* was given to them by *waaqa* himself from the very beginning, whilst the law of *Mako Bili* came to them through people, through their great leaders, given to them by *waaqa* (Bartels, 1983:334).

According to Bartels therefore we understand that Matcha's explanation of *safuu* indicate that it is a divine law while laws are manmade either they are based on *safuu* or humans own making. Therefore, laws that are made by human beings should coincide with the natural law that is given by creator.

The Oromo claim that the understanding of laws of *Waaqa*, nature, and society both morally and ethically and living accordingly is necessary. They believe in God's law and the law of society that they establish through the *Gadaa* system of democracy to maintain *nagaa* (peace) and *safuu* among *Waaqa*, society, and nature to achieve their full human destiny known as *kao* or *kayyo* (Hinnant, 1978: 210). Respect for the laws of *Waaqa* and *Gadaa* have been essential to maintain *nagaa Oromo* (Oromo peace) and *safuu* (moral balance) in society (Hinnant, 1978: 207-243: Knutsson, 1967).

Similar principle was researched among the Boorana Oromo. What is proper and improper are the basis for law making. In this case laws are made based acceptable normative standards. Bassi (2005) put this idea as follows:

The distinction between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable is a fundamental to the decision making process. People conceive some basic principles, they act and evaluate certain behavior by making constant reference to a complex ideological construct, identifiable in large part with the normative sphere.

### **2.3 Theoretical Frameworks**

This research is data-based which is verified by various qualitative research methods. Therefore, linking with established theoretical frameworks is tying oneself with predetermined knowledge which may be misleading. Empirical researches rarely use a theoretical framework. Because empirical data that is generated from field work should determine theoretical frameworks in which this research may fit into. Qualitative

researchers mostly use grounded theory. However, since theoretical frameworks are essential in establishing a set of lenses through which the researcher views the topic, some of them have been tested. And fragmented pieces of data were interconnected by fitting them into a pre-established theory. Generally, since there were many assumptions about the topic I have investigated, I preferred to frame my research.

There are three dominant and clashing theories on how social norms come into exist. One perspective assumes norms as arbitrary rules for behavior that are adopted because they are valued or reinforced by the culture. Accordingly, most norms that guide our daily activities have evolved from behaviors that are performed and rewarded repeatedly. These behaviors then become the favored reaction to particular situations. That means, the content of any norm is neither inherently good nor inherently valuable.

Another standpoint is that normative behavior is functional and aids in accomplishing the goals of the group. In other words, norms develop to encourage or restrain behaviors that are connected to survival. Therefore, the content of norms is neither arbitrary nor trivial, since the ability to develop and communicate norms is evolutionarily adaptive and aids in our survival as a species. So, cultural norms evolve in a manner that is very similar to the natural selection of species (Cialdini and Trost, 2004:152).

The third theory is called rational choice theory which argues that norms arise from the interaction of rationally self-interested individuals. As individuals come together for their own mutual benefit they form groups. The group in such a model is understood as an aggregation of the individuals who comprise it and nothing more. Norms, in turn, are simply reflection preferences of behavioral of the majority of group members. People generally desire to be around others because they associate being with others with their own self-gratification and abiding by the norm in turn ensures group acceptance. In view of that, individual is the basic unit of such a conception of the group, and interdependence is the basic force that holds these individuals together (Knight and Ensminger, 1998:107).

The present thesis operates within none of the above frameworks. However, some points of all theories meet the normative conception of the Oromo. At the same time it is very difficult to take one independent theory to explain Oromo cultural norms for some points of all theories deviate from Oromo conception on how norms come in to exist, survive and are enforced. Bartels (1983:121) reported that the *Macha* believe that *safuu* is something that *Waaqa* gave them. Everything has an appropriate place in the order of the universe, and it exists and functions according to the place and role it is naturally endowed with.

## **2.4. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.4.1 Enforcing Norms or Imposing Sanctions**

This sub-topic is aimed at finding gaps and errors of earlier researches on the topic which is highly important to justify the relevance of this research. Relevant and available sources are going to be assessed in line with the current research and how the topic has been studied before.

Dejene (in customary dispute resolution mechanisms) (2007: 265) has revealed that there are some institutions which enforce sanction to bring peace among some communities. In the past, he continues, among the Oromo in addition to the societal values, decisions were enforced through coercive forces. The society punished criminals or deviants using corporal punishment. They were flogged or thrashed by whipping. This practice is still common among the Borana, the Kereyou and the Guji. He had revealed that lineage assemble force to punish deviants in mass and demolish offenders fence, slaughter his livestock and feed themselves. They also confiscate the properties of backsliders by force to enforce their decision.

Similarly as cited in Bassi (2005:173-174) Baxter maintains that the pressure in terms of exclusion from *Nagaa*, that is exclusion from that condition social and sacral cooperation, concord and internal harmony that is recalled every day in greetings and prayers, observing that ‘no man nor family can exist for long as social , herding or ritual isolate’.

Accordingly, sanctions fall into the general category of pressure and ostracism by the community, with the precise and efficacious ritual and metaphysical dimension beyond the social one. Being excluded from using the wells is only a consequence of such ostracism by the community, in that the traditional wells, to be used needs the cooperation of many herding units.

A group does not establish or enforce norms about every conceivable situation. Norms are formed and enforced only with respect to behaviors that have some significance for the group. The frequent distinction between task maintenance duties and social maintenance duties helps explain why groups bring selected behaviors under normative control (Fieldman, 1984:47).

From the above two notions we can realize that norms are launched selectively on issues contributing to the survival and wellbeing of a given society. The primary goal of enforcing norm is to ensure a long lasting peace; it is not meant to reprimand wrongdoers. However, what we have to underline is that each of our daily activities are surrounded by norms; even though norms are necessarily designed selectively in Oromo, it seems implausible to link them to survival.

The Oromo have developed time tested mechanisms of punishing wrongdoers. Accordingly one of the immoral crimes is stealing. Huseen has presented how thieves are penalized and re-integrated.

Hattuu yoo qucan dhaddacha raabaa ka seeraatitti itti muran. Bakkuma seeraa sanitti fe'uma saddeetiin hidhan. Warri horiin jalaa hatame sun jirma (ulee) jiidhaa muratee karaa nami deemurratti gufuutti hidhanii warri horiitii fi namuu mataa keessa qu'aa (qucaa) bira lufa. Kanaaf yoo mammaakan 'bootteef hattuu qucaa hin dhiisan,' jedhaniif. Haa ta'ullee yoo fira(aanaa) qabaatte dubbii irraa fixuun hin dandayama. Akki itti irraa fixanillee bokkuutti himanii, dubbii qabanii, saddeeta lama guuranii irraa fixan; saddeeta kanallee seeraa shanachaa fi bokkuu kennan. Hattuu yoo jaarsi itti mure bokkuun itti gooda. (Huseen, 2000:76)

The above assertion when translated to English is as follows:

Thieves are punished by *qucaa* after decided by Gadaa assembly. After that they are tied by eight ropes and every body passing over the road including those whose cattle are taken are allowed to beat their head by wet sticks after the thief is tied against stub. The proverb saying 'thief is not pardoned or left unbeaten because she cries' goes with this situation. However, their case can follow normal procedure by informing the *bokkuu* and other Gadaa leaders if the thief have relative. After all, if elders label the individual as criminal, the *bokkuu* implement the decision.

According to the above assertion, thieves are beaten by the decision of Gadaa leaders. They are tied up on the road and every one beats them when passing. There is no sympathy for such individuals. The wrongdoer is restored to normal life after a ritual of purification is made by *Bokkuu*.

The above practice is executed on an individual who is deviated extremely from major principles. The following idea was observed by Bassi among the Boorana.

The punishment called *balbala* consists of publicly thrashing a person during a course of an assembly. The word seems to be derived from the verb *balbala-ta*, 'to be very heated or 'to seethe with rage or to be very angry'. This emphasizes the fact that this public thrashing is an emotional reaction to extremely unacceptable behavior in a meeting (Bassi, 2005:201).

On the other hand, sexual relationship within relatives is incestuous among the Oromo. Such practice is followed by extensive punishment and ritual of purification. This idea was portrayed by Huseen as the following:

Aadaa wayyoomaa kana wajjin ka deemu ka biraa ammoo haraamawu'u. Akkuma gararraatti hubannetti, Arsiii keessatti yoo namni tokko dubartii fuulasaa hintaanetti deebi'e (dhaqe) yookiin dubartiin deebite, haraamaye yookiin haraamofte jedhaman. Dhiirallee ta'e dubartiin aadaa wayyoomaa faallesse yookiin faallessite, dubartii wayyuutitti deebi'e, yookiin dhiira wayyuutti deebite lamaanuu, ummata gadi baye keessatti bakka wayyuu fi ka saalfatan cufti jirutti uffata irraa mulqanii qullaa isaanii duma(eegee hoolaa) tafatti cuqqaaluun mana korsiiisan; ka kana godhu warra seeraati. Achirraa gad bu'an dafaniiti horii itti qalan(Huseen, 2000:42-43).

The above paragraph is translated as follows:

The other culture linked with the custom of reverence is incest taboo. Individuals enjoying sexual gratification with their relatives are labeled as *haraamuu*, incest. Relatives are *woyyuu* (state of respect and distance) are for one another. If this distance is broken and incest is committed, the incestuous or adulterated individuals are mounted house at the presence of all residents including *woyyuu* by putting off their clothes. This is supported by plugging the backsides of the wrongdoers by dock of sheep. This ritual is executed by Gadaa lawyers. After this episode, a cattle is slaughtered immediately after they come down from the house to start the procedure of cleansing them.

Abbas (2014:60) in the same manner clearly underscore that in Arsii Oromo any sexual relation, let alone marriage, with a patrilineal woman, with whom he shares paternal ancestral genealogy provokes an unpurifiable incest as opposed to other types of incest crimes which could be purified or cleaned with special rites.

Accordingly, '*Haraama 'uu*' (incest) is another breach of Oromo moral category, *safuu*. This happens for instance when a man have sexual intercourse with a woman of his relatives or a woman have sex with a man of her relatives. An individual guilty of this immoral action, is naked in front of the multitude and mounted the house. Cultural lawyers touch private part and buttock of both culpable individuals by a dock of sheep so that they feel ashamed. They are cleansed after extensive ritual is made.

Leus (2006:104) similarly informs us that making unmarried girl pregnant as serious breach of law which is punished by capital punishment. This was stated as the following:

Making an unmarried girl pregnant is one of the gravest offences in Borana society, one that is taken to the highest court (the *Abbaa Gadaa* with the *Raaba*). In the past, if found guilty, the man would be put in a termite hill (*boolla kuyyisaa*), very often he was killed inside. Or he would be beaten to death. Now days they are just outcasted, ostracized and ignored.

This assertion clearly tells us that the Oromo severely resist incestuous relationship for it has a long lasting consequence and great breach of social norm. As a result, the penalty for individuals involved in such activity too is severe.

To sum up the chapter, the Oromo use various mechanisms of norm enforcements. This is highly backed and approved by the worldview of the society which is rooted in Oromo religion and Gadaa system. Capital punishments and social exclusion with their respective rituals of purification was prevalent when *Gadaa* was fully operational to restore peace of the entire society. In general, all forms of cultural punishments are fundamentally concerned with ensuring considerable conformity to the regulated rules.

## **CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA**

This chapter is aimed at shedding light on the background of the study area. To better understand the socio-cultural background of the society describing religion, history, social organization, kinship, economy, culture, genealogy, economy, physical location/features and natural resources of Arsii Oromo in general and the study community in particular constitutes the central part of this chapter. Information that is going to be provided in this section plays a pivotal role in understanding the atmosphere in which the title under discussion occurs. Similarly, general information about people and their daily life is a valuable context for a better understanding of the research process as well.

### **3.1 Geographic Location and Population**

Adaamii Tulluu as its name implies is named after Adaamii (*Euphorbia candelabrum*) which was densely planted on hills around the area which gives the meaning of *Euphorbia candelabrum* of the hill. The district, as its name implies was formed through the integration of the two independently administered districts, Adaamii Tulluu (formerly Zuway akababi) and Jiddoo Kombolchaa (part of former Lanfaro). The two sub-districts were under the Haykoch and Butajira Awraja of shoa Administrative region.

With the establishment Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in 1989 and the abolition of former sub-district level administration units, Zuway Akababi Awraja was formed which includes the surface area of the present day Adaamii Tulluu district and a section of the former Dugda part of Dugda Bora sub-district under the umbrella of south Shoa administrative region.

With the establishment of regional state in 1993, part of the former East Shoa and south shoa Administrative regions were brought together to form the current East Shoa Zone. This new move once again initiated the former sub-district Administrative structure to come in to existence. The part of former *Zuway Awraja* come to be *Adaamii Tulluu* District and a section of a former *Lanfaro Awraja* came to form *Jiddoo Kombolchaa*

district. Its capital *Baatuu* (formerly renamed by Hailesillassie as *zuway*) is situated 160km away from Addis Ababa on the way to Awassa. *Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo kombolchaa* is located in central rift valley area of East Shoa Zone. *Arsii Negelle* in south, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region in the West (Silte and Marako), Dugdaa District in North and Zuway Dugda District in the East bound the study area.

With regard to the historical background of *Baatuu* town, the coinage of the name of *Baatuu*, the town situated in the central rift valley system has the connotation of ‘transcend us many years’, ‘save us from dangers’ which is prevalent in daily praying of the Oromo. It was established in 1953 during Hailesillassie regime. In 1956, Hailesillassie changed the name to ‘*Zuway*’ even though the residents are not certain of the meaning it carries. It was in the same year that the town was accommodated under *Hykochina Butajira* zone.

During Dergue regime, the town became part of south shoa zone until FDRE restructuring of the country. Additionally, the town is the residence of huge factories like Sher Ethiopia, costic soda, *Adaamii Tulluu* pesticide, Castle Woynery and flour factories which are functioning still now.

The district lies between  $7^{\circ}37'8^{\circ}04''$ N latitude and  $38^{\circ}32'-39^{\circ}04''$ E longitude. According to CSA 1996, the total area of 1230 Sq km, and the total population of *Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa* district by the year 2003 and 2004 was 158081 and 162559 respectively. The district has four kebele towns and 43 rural kebeles. *Abboosa*, *Bulbula*, *Jiddoo* and *Adaamii Tulluu* are the main semi-urban and urban localities of the district.

## **3.2. Natural Resources**

### **3.2.1 Relief, Drainage, Lakes and Climate**

#### **3.2.1.1 Relief**

The topography of the study area varies from high mountains to grasslands, jungles and deserts. Majority of the district’s land is flat. However, in some parts of the district hills, mountains and lowest points are also found. Most of the places in the district ranges in

altitude from 1500 to 2300 meters above sea level. For instance Mount Aalutoo, the highest point in the district is found in Aluuto Peasant Association which raises about 4332m<sup>2</sup> above sea level. Major hills existing in the district includes Waarjaa, Worensaa, Aalutoo, Qancaraa, Hiraphee, cabbii and Adaamii Tulluu (Source: Office of Agricultural Development of Adaamii Tulluu District).

### **3.2.1. 2 Drainage**

Many rivers and lakes by which this district is endowed with vividly make Adaamii Tulluu one of the important tourist destinations. The Bulbula river starts from the lake Dambal and flows to Lake Abjata. It is widely used for irrigation purpose. The Jiddoo River, which exists only during summer season begins from Gurage highlands splitting in to two branches along its courses and flows in to Lake Shala. Hora Kaloo River flows to Lake Abjata to form a boundary between Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa & Arsi Negele districts.

Similarly, Adaamii Tulluu is one of the “lakes District” which shares part of the main Rift valley lakes of Dambal, Abjata and Langano which are 4m, 24m and 46m deep respectively. Both zuway and Langano lakes have high fish production potential. Zuway lake with surface area of 434km<sup>2</sup> is the largest lake in the east shoa zone. The area of Abjaataa and Laangannoo are 205km<sup>2</sup> and 230km<sup>2</sup> respectively. (Source: Office of Agricultural Development of Adaamii Tulluu District)

The attractive Islands of Lake Dambal which encompasses five impressive and different sized islands (Tulluu Guddoo, Fuunduroo, Dhaddacha, Galiilaa and Dabra-siinaa) with their monasteries, the various bird species of Lake Abjata, and the Langano resort sites all make these water bodies important potential tourist centers.

**Picture 1: Image of Lake Dambal**



### **3.2.1.3 Climate**

Ecologically, the district is generally termed as mainly lowland with unreliable rainfall condition, which is bimodal and erratic in nature. Its distribution pattern too is not dependable and the areas remain dry for most months of the year. All parts of Adaamii Tulluu district comes with the sub-tropical climate zone. Average annual temperature and rainfall are 15-20<sup>0</sup> C and 800mm respectively.

High rate of evapo-transpiration as a result dry condition coupled with low rainfall availability limit the practice of agriculture even though pastoralism was the basic mode of living before the introduction of modern farming. (Source: Office of Agricultural Development of Adaamii Tulluu District)

### **3.2.2 Vegetation and Wild life**

#### **3.2.2.1 Vegetation**

The major natural vegetation found in the district belongs to woodland and savannah. As a result the Arsii of this area are predominantly livestock raisers, although recently farming economy has been introduced by government to diversify means of livelihood. The vegetation coverage of the area is dominantly acacia shrub, bush and grassland. Historically the district is known for its dense cover of acacia tree with typically savanna grass land. However, recently due to unwise utilization of forest resource by local community for charcoal making, cultivation and over grazing, those natural species have been recently destroyed tremendously.

Forests in the study area are the home of various medicinal herbs which in turn play an indispensable role in improving healthcare, reducing poverty and maintaining environmental protection. On top of that plants of various types are used for building, wooden utensils and honey productions (Source: Office of Agricultural Development of Adaamii Tulluu District).

### **3.2.2.2 Animals**

Major wild animals of the district include monkey, hyena, ape, fox, and tortoise. And among tame animals cattle, goats, sheep, horses, and donkeys are widely reared. These domestic animals are used for transportation and their product like meat and manure. Milk is used for the making of dairy products. It is consumed in a variety of forms like fresh milk (*aannan*), yogurt (*Itittuu*) and butter. Hide of cattle is used for clothing, especially to prepare *kal'oo*, clothing made of skin. It is not uncommon to see artistically crafted cowhide in each and every house of the Arsii Oromo. Cattle dung is used for fuel and maintaining fertility of land. Owning many herds is the symbol of wealth and status. Above all, they serve the purpose of paying bride wealth, religious sacrifices. Cattle are also used to pay legal punishments in time of need.

Food taboos, which are social restrictions on the consumption certain species are rampant. For instance, the Arsii do not eat the meat of animals with cloven hoofs. More specifically, the abboosa do not eat light brown or ash colored cattle for historical reason. Long years ago, the abboosa was preparing a feast for *Gadaa* ritual. Unfortunately, they slaughtered donkey of this color to slay cattle for the time was running to dark evening. After this grave mistake they identified that they slaughtered donkey because of color similarity. On that day on wards, the elders of this sub-clan swore not to eat light browned or grey cattle.

### **3.2.3 Minerals**

It is evident that Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa is found in the Ethiopian rift valley floor. As a result, its geology is dominated by volcanic and tectonic activities. Due to this reason, the district is endowed with mineral resources including pumice, salt soil, soda ash, sand and sandstone. These minerals are being mined both at small and large scales for different purposes including construction, industries and raw materials. And parts of the district which are the home of these precious minerals are Kamo, garbii, waarjaa and Tokummaa, Basuma, Jela, Waliin Bulaa, Aalutoo, Golba Alutoo, Abayyii Dannabaa, Hurufa Lolee, O'ituu, Qarxafaa, oada Anshuuraa, Kormee Bujuree, Doodicha, Wayyisoo and Aannanoo shiishoo.(source: mineral and energy office of Adaamii Tulluu District)

### **3.2.4 Tourist Attraction Sites**

There are five islands around Lake Dambal. Irreecha malkaa tajoo (thanksgiving/new year ritual), Aalutoo hill, Allaattii hill, Gadaamotaa hill, Gombisa Fardaa, Dambal lake, M. Lalisaa spring are to mention tourist attraction sites of the district. The attractive Islands of Lake Dambal with their monasteries, various bird species of Lake Abjata, and the Langano resort sites all make this water bodies important potential tourist centers.

### **3.2.5 Indigenous Methods of Maintaining Soil Fertility**

Traditional method of maintaining soil fertility includes application of animal dung, crop rotation and fallowing while using artificial fertilizers is modern method of maintaining soil fertility of the soils. With regard to soil conservation, methods practiced by farmers of the district include contour ploughing, terracing, compost, construction of check-dum and afforestation are among the major methods.

## **3.3 Genealogy of Arsii Oromo**

According to Baxter 1996:1, the Oromo are one of the most numerous people inhabiting Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa at large. The people live in a territory that extends from the highlands of Ethiopia in the north, to the Ogaden and Somalia, in the East, to the Sudan border in the west and across the Kenyan border to the Tana River in the South.

The Oromo, according to Gemetchu (1993) are divided into five major groups: the Tuulamaa and the Maccaa, the Sabboo and the Goonaa, the Raayyaa and the Aseeboo, the Siikkoo and the Mandoo and the Ituu and the Humbannaa.

Alemayehu et.al (2006) too confirms the above assertion even though little difference is observed on some points. According to this source, the Oromo is roughly divided into Matcha-Tulama, Sabboo-Goonaa, Gujii, Siikkoo-Mandoo, Karrayyuu, Walloo and Ituu-Humbannaa. (Baxter 1983: 129-149) on the other hand presents another version. According to him Borana and Barentu moieties descended from the same family stock called Oromo. What needs further investigation is whether these five sets (Sabboo-Goonaa, Maccaa-Tuulama, Raayyaa-Aseebu Siikkoo-Mandoo and Ituu-Humbannaa) of sub-moieties are extended from the Borana and Barentu moieties or not. However, what we can agree on is the first three sets belong to Borana, and the second two sets are branches of Barentu (Asafa, 2012).

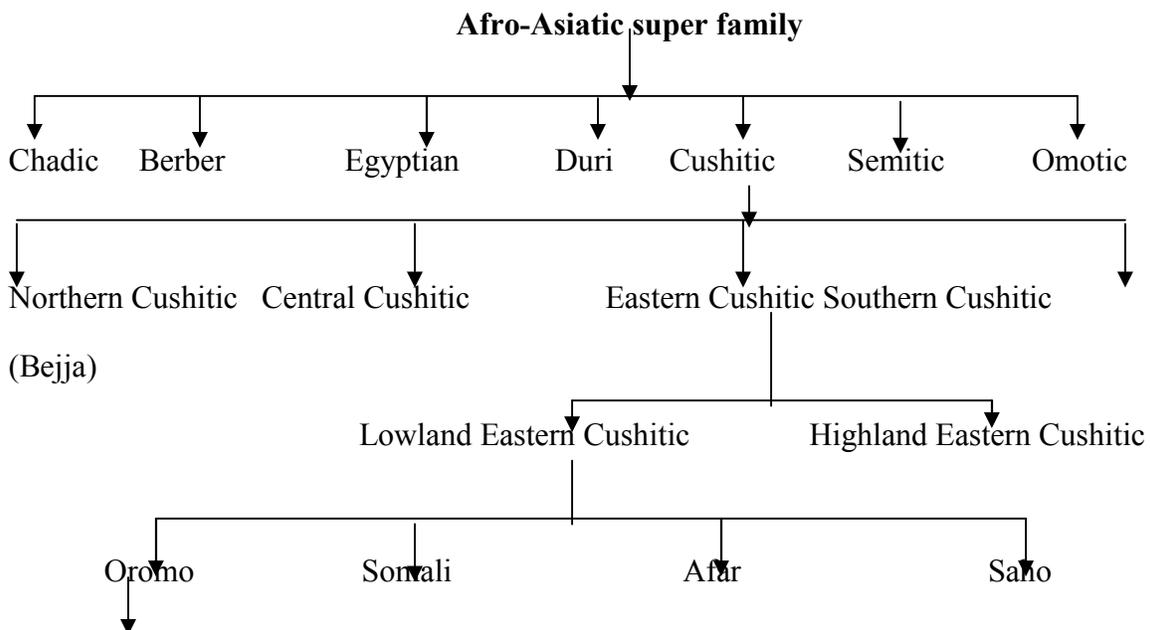
Accordingly, the Arsii are members of the larger Oromo group in Ethiopia and occupy the southern highland and lowland semi arid areas. Today, the Arsii Oromo are found in Bale, Southeastern Shoa, extending up to the border of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State. Arsii settlement area also expands up to the settlement of Sidama and Gujii in the north and the west and of the Borana Oromo in the south (Alemayehu et.al, 2006:203). The study community uses the name Arsii to say both Oromo and Arsii proper we already know.

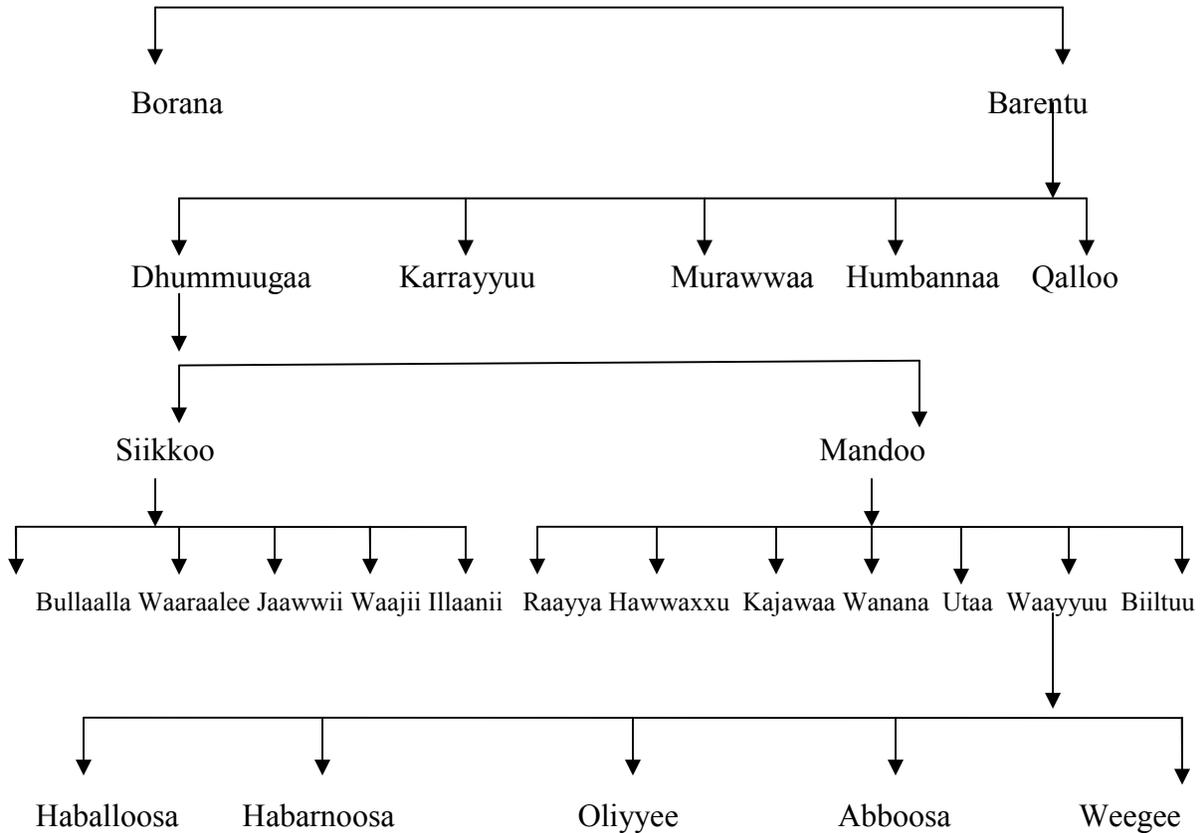
Arsii/Arsee gave birth to Siikkoo, Mandoo and Waata. Majority of Mandoo dominantly lives in present Bale; however, Waayyuu which lives in present east Shoa zone trace their ancestor to the line of Mandoo. Utaa (which dominantly occupy Arsii Negelle and Shaashamannee and partly Jiddoo area of Adaamii Tulluu District) is one of the brothers of Waayyuu. And Waayyuu (Haballoosa, Habarnoosa, Oliyyee, Abboosa, and Weege) dominantly occupy Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa district.

The elders did not agreed on the exact name of the five *waayyuus*. Some of them firmly held the view that the valid children of *Waayyuu* are Luugoo, Hambeentuu, Waaqoo, Tum'a and Qalloo. Another opposite idea identifies the five *Wayyuus* as Haballoosa, Habarnoosa, Oliyyee (eldest child of *Waayyuu*), Abboosa, and Weegee. The later one is popularly accepted and functioning currently on Gadaa power transfer.

However, several elders contend that these names were labeled after *Arsii* was accommodated into the king system to fit in to the system. Hailesillassie selected *balabbats* from the former clan for convenience of administration although they are not immediate children of the *waayyuu*. Despite all these contradictions, East Shoa Zone is predominantly occupied by one of the Oromo sub-groups known as *Waayyuu*.

The top social structure in *Arsii* Oromo is gosa (clan). Lineage is reckoned through male links only. *Arsii* elders hold a common view that the *Arsii* are divided into the Mandoo and Siikkoo moieties. The Siikkoo has five sub-moieties collectively called Shanana Siikkoo (the five ones of Siikkoo). They are Bullallaa, Wacaalee, Jaawwii, Waajii and Ilaannii. The Mandoo has seven sub-moieties collectively called Torban Mandoo (the seven ones of Mandoo) which includes Raayyaa, Kajawaa, Hawaxaa, Utaa, Waayyuu, Harawaa and Biiltuu. Genealogical tree of Oromo in general and *Arsii* Oromo in particular is as follows (Alemayehu et.al, 2006):





Although the kinship is based on patrilineal system, a male ‘ego’ cannot marry his maternal close kins’ daughters. Marriage between durbii (cousins), iddiinii (children of cousins) and hidda (cousins’ children) even if they are from different moieties is all considered haraamuu (incest) among Borana Oromo (Ayalew, 2002:23; Dejene, 2007; Bartles, 1983).

I am informed the same principle from my Arsii informants. Through the mother line too there should be minimum generational gap that allows marriage. This means even though the mother is from another clan her line of marriage is taken in to consideration. The implication here is that children belong to the clan of both their father and mother. Generally, kinship in Arsii Oromo is highly valued and determines each and every border of interaction in every day interaction.

### 3.3.1 Marriage Customs

Marriage is one of the crucial rituals in the Oromo. The Arsii Oromo is scarcely populated. As a result polygamy, having at least two wives is widely practiced especially to successfully manage the vast economy. For example one household owns many dispersed farmlands which cannot be supervised within one day. Therefore, putting wives at different places so that they are in charge of each ploughing lands is preferred. The frequent question of women that force their husbands to be polygynous stem from this fact. As a result I do not have concrete premises to conclude that the practice of polygyny is always initiated by husbands and imposed on women for these questions frequently come from women themselves particularly in the study area.

*Kadhaa* is a marriage system organized by consent of the two future spouse's family. That is why the family keenly follows relationship that is going to be established. It is not only the matter of focus only on physical appearance and loving each other.

During mate selection, family background and her deeds are equally focused. For instance, to measure whether she has the skill of domestic works she is requested to prepare coffee on the course of marriage arrangement. Therefore, most of the time parents dictate whom their children will marry. This kind of arrangement I think is the corner stone which makes traditional marriages divorce resistant. It is the matter of the clan involved, not only individuals married each other. It unites two different clans.

*Miinjee* (best men) is regarded as bride's brothers. This is culturally designed to reduce the distress she may face because of loneness; it is *miinjee* who reaches her in time of every difficulty and he is responsible more than every body for all problems she may face because the groom is taken out of her clan and mixed with completely new clan she does not know before. *Miinjee* advises her in all dimensions of life. *Miinjee* specially is responsible to inform new environment. The common saying '*Gorsaaf miinjee ta'i*' meaning 'be best men to advice' also expresses the role of *miinjee* as a primary advisor.

Other forms of marriage which are less usual include *walgara* (sister exchange), *dhaala* (levirate), *butii* (abduction), *mimbeetoo* (a type of marriage whereby sister of deceased wife is given to the husband), *hawwii* (marriage arranged by mutual interest of the couple) and *nikaa* (marriage by *sharia*).

Marriage between cousins are allowed and even preferred by Islam religion. This practice is supported by the notion that Prophet Mohammed himself married to his cousin and allowed the marriage of his daughter to his cousin. Nikah solemn and sacred social contract between bride and groom is also increasing. However, marriage between cousins is facing fierce resistance from the large community. Cousins are considered as brother and sister among the Arsii Oromo.

In relation to the increment of bride wealth from time to time because of various factors, major changes have introduced. Because bride wealth is increasing people specially the poor started to intermarry with other ethnic groups.

### **3.3.2 The Links between Kinship, Oromo Religion and Norm Enforcements**

First of all I felt that it is very important to know the kinship system of Arsii Oromo before investigating their daily interaction for it shows us a clear insight into the workings of the culture. Every body in the society does have relatives. There may be correspondent in-laws. And close relatives live near one another as an extended family. In a wider sense, there is hearth, Sub-sub lineage, house (extended family), *lammii* and clan. And it is very simple to understand that this network is strong and multifaceted in cultural societies. In general, in order to understand the symbolisms of various actions taking place on rituals it is mandatory to be familiar with social structure of the society.

In Oromo nation, kinship takes three major forms. The first and most crucial one is by blood. The second one is through marriage tie. The third and final one is one is through Gadaa (which may encompass *harma hodhaa* (licking a breast), *moggaasa* (re-naming) and *Luba baasa* (setting free) and *guddifachaa* (adoption).

The Arsii identify their relationships in three other principal ways. The first is *aanooma* (relation through descent or parentage). The second is relation through *Soddooma* (relation through affinity or marriage). These two types of identifying relations together indicate the people's system of classifying *Worrooma* (family relationship). The third and the broadest form of relationship is *Arsoomaa* (Arsihood), and it refers to the cultural homogeneity and the *aaloo* (the customary code) of the people. Arsihood provides the people with an identity that cuts across allegiances base on moiety and from explanation of patrilineal relationship of the Arsii Oromo (Teshome 2008: 30)

Therefore, it is in this framework that individuals who are appropriate and not appropriate for sexual partnership are labeled. Not only is this but also each and every routine interactions of the community members guided by this general principle. Social interactions taking place between relatives differ from their relations with other groups. As a result, heavy emphasis is given to teach children to count their genealogy/ancestry as many generations as possible from their very childhood to arrange solid, stable and appropriate marriage in their future.

Legesse (1973:39) too puts the lineage of the Borana in descending order as follows: *gosa*, *mana* (lineage), *warra* (sub-lineage), *balbala* (Sub-sub lineage) and *ibidda* (hearth).

### **3.4. Cultural Foods**

Maize, barley, sorghum, wheat, sweet potatoes and beans are widely grown and are the principal forms of subsistence. In addition to this, these crops are used to prepare cultural foods like *caccabsaa*, *marqaa* (porridge), *cuukkoo* (roasted ingredient of barley mixed with butter), *qorii* (roasted barley dubbed with butter) and many others. Similarly, milk is the staple diet in the area which accompanies all cultural foods. Coffee is also drunk by adding milk to it; drinking *buna gurraacha* (black coffee) is considered as poorness.

### **3.5 Major Institutions**

#### **3.5.1 The Arsii Gadaa**

Five Gadaa sets of Oromo are known as *Birmajii* (the eldest of five lubas), *Bultuma*, *Horata*, *Bahara* and *Roobalee* (the youngest). Regarding the name of each set, all of them connote hopefulness and bright futurity is attached to each of them. Accordingly,

*Birmajii* is known by rejoice. Bultuma came from ‘*bultii*’ (lively hood) of both human beings and cattle; *Horata* is the set in which prosperity of the society is wished. *Bahara* has the close meaning of peace and order; *Bahaarri baraartii qala* to mean the *Bahara* slaughter to save the society from dangers. And Roobalee is expected to have ample rain and wetness which is the source of life for all living creatures.

Daniel (2002:32) too accepts the idea that there are five Gadaa classes among the Arsii Oromo which encompasses Birmaji, Bultuma, Horata, Bahara and Robale. Accordingly Birmaji symbolizes birmadu, the first wife; Bultuma, long life for cattle and people; Horata is named wishing successful reproduction; Bahara is named after wishing peace and healthy years; and Robale is named after quest for rain.

In line with this Odaa (sycamore tree) has religious social and political interpretations in the course of Gadaa system. Hence, it is difficult to give an independent meaning to the sycamore without understanding the concept of Gadaa system. Both Gadaa and sycamore has a meaning of sacredness, a place of blessing, fertility, prosperity and political deliberations. One can not be separated from another. For the Arsii every shade under which *Gadaa* rituals are performed is considered as *Odaa* despite of its type and usual name.

The Arsii Gadaa shares basic components with Gadaa ritual of other Oromo lands. Eight year term of office, five Gadaa sets, general assembly and rituals pertinent to Gadaa system are among the major. At the end of every *Gadaa* period there is a great ceremonial *Buttaa* which is important in measurement of time. On the final day of general assembly, laws are made and heroic performances are carried out. For instance, the qondaala (the braves) present heroic chant (*geerarsa*) by mounting trees at the presence of the multitude. The ritual of integrating and incorporating individuals or clans of non-Oromo groups is performed. The clan who does not participate in this ritual is denied the membership of *Gadaa* system.

This disintegration of Arsii Gadaa in to sub-clan came in to exist after the assembly of *Qixiibee (Dhaddacha Qixiibee)*. The assembly of *Qixiibee* in fact was held around 1886 because it was the time when *Aanolee* atrocity took place. Before that there was one Gadaa law, common Abbaa Gadaa and common Gadaa center for the entire Arsii. The centers of assembly of Arsii Oromo in chronologic order were Madda Walaabuu, Dumaali, Dallo, Midhaaddu and Bareedduu. Until the assembly of *Qixiibee* the Arsii Gadaa was administering from the centers and for the smooth functioning of works pertinent to Gadaa, sub-structures were established at different places.

The Gadaa law of Utaa and Waayyuu are different even though there are common issues that make them similar. For instance, hundred cattle are preserved for Gumaa in the law of Utaa while the Gumaa in the law of Waayyuu is finished by fifty cattle. The law for reconciliation, gumaa, and marriage have slight differences and a sense of competitions is seen between both Gadaas. For example the members of Waayyuu Gadaa often say '*dubbiin utaa fi dubbiin mucaa tokko*' which means the discussion of Utaa and children is the same.

What is special with the current Arsii Gadaa is that each sub-clan has its own Gadaa leader. Until very recently, the Bahara and Bultuma *gogessa* were holding office turn by turn in the Gadaa of the five waayyuu. This occurred after the weakening of Arsii Gadaa. Among the five sub-clan of Arsii, it was the Oliyyee who preserved the Gadaa of Waayyuu; as a result, it took the form of hereditary coronation. The Abbaa Gadaa of both *gogeessa* was selected from the Oliyyee by default. What could be changed from one Gadaa period to the other was only the door from which the Abbaa Gadaa is selected. This can be witnessed by the fact that the Gadaa of Bahara was from Annaa (door of oliyyee) and the succeeding Abbaa Gadaa (the current Gadaa) was from Waaqoo door of the same sub-clan. Even the members of oliyyee Gadaa (Waaqoo and Annaa) were fighting over Gadaa office.

Oliyyee until very recent years was acting as the representative of the all Waayyuu clan. The Gadaa or bokkuu of waayyuu is represented by oliyyee. As a result, *gumaa*, *gubaa* (setting fire to house) and reconciliation were led by the Gadaa of oliyyee.

There was a disagreement on the hereditary feature of *waayyuu* Gadaa. The sub-clan other than oliyyee claimed their right to take over the Gadaa office on their turn after the revitalization of Arsii Gadaa. The Oliyyee on their part defended by arguing that the rest disregarded the Gadaa because of the difficulties occurred. The Gadaa of other sub-clans was in fact left at celebrating the rituals by waiting every eight years.

Gadaa magarsuu (literally making Gadaa green) and Gadaa haressuu (revitalization of Gadaa) were their points of disagreement. The other sub-clans argued by stressing the fact that the governance oliyyee was practicing was not *Gadaa*, but kingship system. The oliyyee on their part defended by presenting that they were the only one who dedicated to maintain the Gadaa of Arsii.

*Jinfuu Darbata* (throwing of *jinfuu*) or *Jinfuu tuulata* (compiling of *jinfuu*) is a ritual which performed every eight year as another important ritual of Arsii Gadaa assembly. *Jinfuu* is the end part of spear. All the Arsii clan should throw this *jinfuu* to assure that they are the member of the Gadaa. How much *jinfuu* was thrown means how much Arsii clan participated on the assembly. The non-Oromo groups also request the incoming Gadaa class to allow them to throw the *jinfuu* which implies that they are requesting the membership of the Gadaa and integration with the Oromo. This ritual has deep symbolical interpretation. First of all, the outgoing Gadaa class is giving the responsibility of keeping the members who have thrown the *jinfuu*. Secondly, the number of clan who approved the discussion of the assembly and accepted the law of this Gadaa is known by this ritual. The clans who do not throw *jinfuu* do not claim the right of membership the Gadaa; if members of such clan are killed by no one is responsible to pay *Gumaa*; if the excluded members kill another man their case is treated by *seera hambaa*, the law for aliens. The intermarriage with such clan is forbidden.

### 3.5.1.1 *Qixxee*

*Qixxee* in Oromo means equal or half. The concept *qixxee* stands for a multiplicity of concepts unless the context of its usage is seriously taken in to consideration. Firstly, it can represent any kind of meeting whether it is reconciliation, Gumaa ritual, pasture land or gathering focusing on water well managements.

Secondly, it means conflict resolution mechanism involving imposition. When elder reconciliation (*jaarsummaa*) proceedings are unable to settle cases because of ignorance of one of the parties in feud, *qixxee* is organized at the house of the person refused the decision. No one is regarded as improper in the deliberation for every body can present his case to the meeting. It is decided by elders not to allow him to give home utensils to the individual; however, he is responsible to serve the mass at his own expense. On the day, the multitude do not have food at their home. It is against norm to allow the elders to sit on the ground; as a result, the individual is accountable to organize necessary things for the deliberation. It is after this kind of punishment that his case is investigated and decision is rendered. Therefore, *qixxee* in this case is conflict resolution mechanism together with certain sanctions as a precondition.

Thirdly, *qixxee* is organized prior to rituals accompanying all clans. Consequently, to discuss how to prepare common rituals and give specific responsibilities to all clans *qixxee* is organized. It is on this type of *qixxee* that individuals in feud are requested to forgive each other before entering to the ritual.

On the other hand, *qixxee* can be held at different stages. The above mentioned types are categorized under small scale *qixxee*. Similarly, at every two or three years the Gadaa organize *qixxee* which is inclusive of all clans. Cases remained unresolved at the first stage, cases concealed because of political, economical and social status and those unfairly decided because of impartiality of elders involved are brought to this assembly. *Qixxee* of this type is organized at the place which is center for all clans. Availability of water is also considered. Accordingly, Malkaa Gootuu (Gootuu River) is the place where *qixxee* of waayyuu is organized. Today however because of the establishment of various

Gadaa centers, it is changed to Hara Booramoo (Booramoo Lake which is center for Oliyyee Gadaa) for Malkaa Gootuu became the center for the sub-clan of Allaa Daalle Gadaa. Allaa Daallee Gadaa by itself was moved to another place for the reason that Malkaa Gootuu is selected for modern irrigation.

### **3.5.1.2 Religion**

In fact, history has shown us that the *Arsii* took Islam religion as a reaction against the effort of the successive Ethiopian regimes specially starting from Menelik to the downfall of Hailesillassie who were trying to forcefully convert them to Christianity, as an institutionalized system for expressing opposition to the system of Amhara rule (Abbas, 2014). As a result the majority of the inhabitants are followers of Islam. There are also observers of Orthodox and Protestantism. Majority of urban dwellers are followers of orthodox Christianity. However significant number of the rural community is reported to be followers of Oromo indigenous religion, *Waaqeffannaa*.

The actual life of the majority of rural dwellers indicates that they label themselves to introduced religions for mere formality. That is why rituals associated with the indigenous religion like, *siiqqee*, *ateetee* and *tajoo* have relatively survived until today. The impact of their indigenous religion on the way people live their everyday lives made it sustainable. Oromo religion in the study area is not confined to certain ritual and ceremony but connected with every day events, duties and occurrences.

### **3.5.1.3 *Qaalluu* among the *Arsii* Oromo**

*Qaalluu* institution has been changed and modified. But it has remained important institution because of its protection of an Oromo life, the dispensing of local justice based on Oromo customs and its ability to provide a solution to problems created by a changing condition.

The *Qaalluu* institution has been changing in different parts of Oromia in response to foreign religions and other external influences. The practices of the *Qaalluu* institution in the present day Borana are in some respects different from the practices of the *Qaalluu* institution in other parts of Oromia (Workneh, 2005:7).

#### **3.5.1.4 Libation**

*Dhibaayyuu* can be best translated to libation. It is a religious ritual of scarification *waaqa* offered to thank for their past success and pray for the future life. The ritual is accompanied by scarification of animals and pouring of milk under sacred trees. By this ritual, misfortunes are shielded and prosperity, rain and health are wished. Animals presented for sacrifice are not eaten; rather, their meat is placed in fire so that its smoke reaches *Waaqa*. When drought becomes difficult ritual on which the milk of black cow is presented will be arranged. On dusk, when cattle come back to their kraal, the milk of black cow (which is purely symbolic) is libated. Extensive praying is also made by *bokkuu* to instantly avert the same problem.

#### **3.6.2 Women Based Institutions**

##### **3.6.2.1 *Ateetee***

*Ateetee* is women's divinity which is symbolized by *callee* (bead) (cowry shells) which is passed to eldest daughters. According to Daniel (1984, 111) the various songs of *ateetee* imply that "[a]teete is a ceremony prepared for *Ayyolee*, *Maaram* and *Waaqa* as thanksgiving by those who have children and a lamentation by the barren women". *Ateetee* is conceived as the goddess of fecundity.

*Ateetee* ritual is organized twice a year. The first one is performed in autumn and it is called *ateetee facaasaa* (the *ateetee* that is performed in the season of sowing crops); this is arranged with the hope of making crops embellished. And the second one which is arranged in spring is called *ateetee duulaa*. It got this name for the reason that this season is widely known for waging war against enemy; *ateetee* of this type is therefore arranged to achieve victory on the rivalry. Even though these two types of *ateetee* take place regularly, it is also arranged when natural calamities like epidemic diseases and drought are broken.

Whenever natural disasters fall, women gather and perform the ritual. Without any fixed timing the Oromo women used to practice *Ateetee* as a way of strengthening their solidarity and as a tool to counter atrocities staged against them by men. The *Ateetee* practice by women is one part of a belief system that women are intermediary figures between *Waaqa* that represents nature and the physical world or human (Hussein, 2004:111).

The overall aim of *ateetee* ritual in general is to smooth the relationship between creator and the created, lushness, abundance, health and solidarity. Beyond that, it is the symbol of motherhood and the divinity itself is embodied as woman. There are cows dedicated to this ritual; these animals including their products are never allowed to be sold or eaten; rather is only used for this rite. Married woman is identified by her *siiqqee* which is never separated from *ateetee* ritual.

### **3.6.2.2 *Wijjoo***

*Wijjoo* is an institution under which women organize themselves for economic, social and political purposes. Basically it is designed to help each other in time of need. Members of *wijjoo* contribute butter on a weekly basis so that it is given back to members on wedding ceremony and rituals which need large amount of butter. The butter that is collected for a particular woman is a form of credit.

*Wijjoo* is a kind of union of women usually in the neighborhood to help each other on events requiring a lot of butter. The meeting of women for this purpose is on a weekly basis at the home of *wijjoo* leader as a form voluntary redistribution of their resources. Women in the clan organize themselves under *wijjoo* to collect and accumulate butter as a symbol of the institution which is distributed again for its members. Overtly it seems economic interdependence of women. However, all rounded discussions including social and political issues are held at the meeting. In case of injustices woman present her domestic problems to the meeting so that they are jointly resolved.

### 3.6.2.3 *Itti Deemsisuu*

*Itti Deemsisuu* literally means calling upon the entire multitude to punish wrongdoers. This is organized when women are treated in an unjust manner. *Itti deemsisuu* is organized under four important circumstances.

The first one is a situation in which a son beat, insult or undermines his mother. Second, when a husband hit his wife with *qanafaa* for she deserves special honor let alone beating or mistreating. Let alone a woman with *qanafaa*, women under normal circumstance are highly revered and given respect. Thirdly, *itti deemsisuu* is organized when males are accused of absenting a woman from women's rituals. Similar to that the same punishment face husbands who beat a woman who has been participating on rituals by arguing that she took a lot of time on the ritual. The fourth and the final circumstance is at a time when males cut shades of women like *dambii* which have sacred status.

Every sacred tree under which women organize rituals is regarded as *dambii* (*Ficus thonningii*) tree. Trees offer the place for many cultural occasions including sacrifices and offerings which are presented to *Waaqa*. *Dambii* trees are the place under which rituals are organized and major political and judicial decisions are made. Etically, it can be taken as a response to maintaining the role of trees in preservation of the natural habitat and biological diversity. To put simply, it serves the purpose of maintaining social and natural order protecting environment additional to the ritual or spiritual functions of *dambii* trees. This adds an important involvement of women in the maintenance of harmony and peaceful coexistence.

Generally, *Itti deemsisuu* is executed from beginning to the end by *siiqqee*. Kuwee (1997) when explaining the multifaceted role of *siiqqee* too says, in religious ceremonies, when they pray to *Waaqa*, or to *Ateetee* the female deity, they hold their *siiqqee*. In short, *itti deemsisuu* is intended to guard women's right to repair the broken peace so that harmony and wellbeing flourish.

### 3.7 Social Status of Elders and Women in *Arsii Oromo*

Elders and women have great reverence in their daily social interaction. There are many women based institutions like *siiqqee*, *qanafaa* (a decoration or curved wooden material breast feeding woman wear on her forehead from her delivery day to around six months), *wijjoo* and *ateetee* each of which are very imperative in guarding women's right.

Economic, political and social values of women in Oromo can be estimated from these institutions. In case of offence against them they struggle the injustice jointly under the umbrella of these sisterhood and/or womanhood institutions. They are never beaten, insulted and disrespected. Rather, they are given the first place. When they are offended, fierce punishment faces the wrongdoer for it is an act against *Waaqa's* law too. Kumsaa (1997) too asserts that the use of *siiqqee* should be examined vis-à-vis the prevalence of *safuu* of *Waaq*. In times when *safuu* prevails, Oromo women take their *siiqqee* from *boroo* to use it for various economic, social and religious activities.

Similarly elders are ordained their position by *Waaqa*. Elders are respected in the *Arsii Oromo* for their character, rightness, wisdom and experience and their role to maintain balance and peace. Thus their decision and advices are respected and valued. The decision of elders is not refused. They are on this earth maintain the relationship between *Waaqa* and human being. The will of *Waaqa* is portrayed through their act and mouth. Generally, they are believed to be nearer to *Waaqa*.

Elders' master and comprehension ability in culture link past and present. Their curse is believed to take away the supernatural protection. The following story happened on an individual refused the decision of elders in the study area solidifies the reverence of elders. The narrative is as follows:

One individual was accused of disputing with his colleague in an unjust manner. And the case was taken to the council of elders. Elders, after analyzing every thing from all perspective found him guilty. However, he never accepted the verdict. The offender rather chose to quit the deliberation by saying "you in no way crack this earth under me".

The elders lamented him to attend the remaining discussion even though he was unable to give ear for them. Within a few days, the land shook and gulped down his entire lineage.

It is with this practical experience that the elder's power (*adda*) and their proximity to creator are evidenced. Let alone refuting their decision, no one is allowed to by pass in front of them when they are on deliberation. Another interesting tradition one can realize from this occurrence is that the family tree as a whole is also responsible for any wrongdoing done by individuals in them. That is why the lineage controls each other in every phase of social life. This in turn rests collective responsibility on every member.

### **3.8 Livelihood and Cooperative Activities**

Culture is publically transmitted knowledge shared by a group of people and everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society. At every social gathering, Oromos commonly sit in a circle. This is done because of two main reasons. The first one is rooted in a belief that discourse is solidified when discussants look at each other as backed by Oromo saying '*Dubbiin ijaan galti*' which means discussion becomes clear when delivered face to face. The reason behind this style is to watchfully observe their environment from all directions for the reason that an enemy may attack them during the deliberation. The space between people who are speaking to each other in informal settings is commonly the same. The Gadaa lawyers through out deliberations sit on the ground equal to other participants. However, to show that the law is above every body they sit on chair when proclaiming law. It does not indicate the status of the individual but, the value of laws made.

It is inevitable to be impressed or essentially surprised to see an immense cultural value of the Oromo in such villages located in close proximity to town which is rich in various factories with its resultant sand witched community. *Waayyuu* sub-moiety of the *Arsii* has sustained many indigenous cultural values of the Oromo. This area is believed to have many Oromo cultures which have been preserved by various rituals and oratures. Among these, funeral festivity, diverse styles of marriage customs with its ample songs,

indigenous cooperative activities, oral literatures like fables, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles and sayings are to mention a few.

The Oromo of this area is also known for its extensive pastoralism which in turn enables the society to be endowed with traditions and norms related with cattle and cattle products like cattle praising songs. Milk is the core food for the family and it is offered for guests before any kind of food. Absence of milk is considered as incompleteness of life.

On top of that many cultural values connected with reading the symptoms of cows to predict future occurrences are also sustained. For example, when cows refuse to go back to pasture after drinking water, sleep around river or lie and excrete drought is expected in the near future. Additionally, if the urine of cattle becomes red necessary preparations are made in advance for drought is inevitable. Similarly, when the owner of cattle is severely sick, cattle are kept not to sleep through out the nights because if they sleep the owner is believed to die immediately. On the other hand, if a bull forbids other cattle to enter kraal, an enemy will raid them in the near future. As a result, cattle kraal is strictly kept through out the nights.

Contributing properties to individuals whose wealth is destroyed by natural calamities by using *gumaata* (gift contributed especially on rites of passages like birth, marriage and death) and *hirpha* (money or materials contributed from lineage in case of natural catastrophes) are also ubiquitous to invigorate the injured life and properties.

*Guddifachaa* (adoption) is also a common practice to ensure the continuation of barren families' history and to build their morality. On the other hand, respecting of elders and thinking for youngest generation. Similarly, the *Bokkuu* of *waayyuu* play a prominent role in praying for rain in time of drought in addition to its usage on passing decisions and symbol of power.

### 3.9 Impact of Factories on Cultural Heritages of the Area

Expansion of factories has advantages and disadvantages for a given community. It is built on community land which is the place of various cultural heritages. The same thing is true for the study area. Once a year, festivity is arranged for the deceased ancestors and on this day that the spirit talks some important secrets of life to the lineages. The forefathers, though dead, are still considered as parts of the family unit and society to which they belonged while they were alive. They are believed to intervene in the day to day activities and lives of their offspring. In this case, the relationship between the departed and existing generation is maintained which is completely different from the tradition of westerners who assume the dead as absolutely separated from the present generation.

Correspondingly, native peoples directly depend on their land for survival, cultural identity, and livelihood. My interview with one of my key informant undoubtedly tells us that ancestors are not separated from today's generation; *ekeraa* (ghost) of ancestors are duly acknowledged annually. By this practice the existing generation creates a rapport between the visible world of humans and invisible world of spiritual beings, *ayyaana*. *Ayyaana* according to Gemechu(2005) is which causes something to come into being and to become that which it has caused. It therefore exists before and after that which it causes to come in to existence. *Ayyaana* in general is by which and through which *waaqa* creates every thing.

Not only that, planting *soodduu* trees on graveyards also plays a decisive role in claiming land ownership of individuals as well as the community as a whole. The original homelands (villages) are traced back by this *soodduu* each of which has their peculiar feature identifying the owner. On the other hand, trees on graveyards can also be considered as a contribution to green environment; it is strictly forbidden to cut such trees for they represent the deceased person. The importance of *soodduu* trees again can also be seen from the perspective that it is a peculiar heritage of the community in terms of its greenness, artistic landscape and archaeological studies centers.

Large scale factories are believed to have significant economic advantages. However, their simultaneous deleterious and adverse affects on indigenous cultures and local communities should also be investigated in advance for physical artifacts and intangible attributes of the community should also be reflected in the development of a given society.

When I see the effects from a folkloric point of view, for instance, many grave yards (*soodduu*) on which 'ekeraa' (ghost) of the dead person live were removed from their place; cultural memorial graves were demolished because of factories by ignoring the truth that such places have special significance for the residents. Castle factory for instance is built on ritual site of the community.

Generally, this chapter has tried to elucidate the socio-economic background of the study area which is very important in approaching the study under discussion. All social, political and economic setting of the Arsii Oromo clearly orient us the milieu in which norm enforcing mechanisms take place.

## Chapter 4: *Qucaa*

### 4.1. *Qucaa* defined

Semantically *qucaa* may have driven from Oromo word '*qu'uu*' which means beating constantly, repetitively and extremely. *Qucaa* therefore is an act of killing or extremely beating individual who repeatedly violate the norms of the society. Accordingly, *qucaa* is executed on offenders when repeated advice does not bear fruit. That means frequent deviance from the custom of the mass force individuals to fall under severe punishment which is implemented by cumulative contribution of all members of the community for the reason that the wrongdoer would be considered as the enemy of all people in the lineage.

Anyone who is found culpable of witchcraft (*falfala*), robbing, and stealing properties repetitively is punished by *qucaa*. Criminals of every type are thoroughly advised again and again to make necessary correction. If it is agreed that the individual does not show any kind of hint to correct his action in his future career the law of *qucaa* is passed on him. In this case, extremely deviant individuals are punished by *qucaa*.

*Qucaa* is the pillar mechanism by which usual wrongdoers are punished. Individuals who are unable to restrain themselves from recurring misdeeds are chastised by *qucaa*. For instance, the thief is pardoned three times and if he continues on stealing, he is punished by *qucaa*. In addition to that, individuals face this punishment when they deny their transgression blindly.

### 4.2 Processing *Qucaa*

The *Utaa-waayyuu* for the final time cross check that the individual is advised and punished repetitively before taking *qucaa* measure. They assure that all stages of punishment could not bring any change on the behavior of the individual.

After it is unanimously decided to punish the wrongdoer by *qucaa* his close agnate takes the initiative of chastising him. This is to publicize that the wrongdoer has made severe offense which is against the interest of the entire community including his close relatives

for such common concern needs common measure. First of all members of his family thrash him sooner than anybody. This means, the immediate families of the offender would take part in the peace making process. The wrongdoer does not deserve any good from his clan. The effect touches everybody in the community. This indicates that justice, peace and order is commonly protected and the interest of entire society is kept.

After decided by *Gadaa*, wrongdoers are tied by ropes and taken to the execution place. Main roads on which many individuals go are selected. Every person who comes across such individuals is responsible to thrash irrespective of friendship or being relative. The offender is tied against stub so that he does not move and defend himself.

The age grade eligible for executing *qucaa* is the *raaba*. The main task of *raaba* class is war by which they defend their territory, raiding of cattle and waging war against their adversary. In short, the *raaba* class is important military faction of Oromo *Gadaa*.

Asmaroom (1973) as well see the role of *raaba* class among the Boorana Oromo. Raaba grade is the warrior grade represents the military force of the Oromo. They have common settlement as a base. Settled together they perform extensive rituals. Formerly they wage war against their enemies either to defend Borana land or to raid cattle. Dereje (2012) too supports this idea. According to him, *raaba* is a matured stage for formal military service under the direction of the *Abbaa duulaa*. They are attached with dual tasks in the society: military service and training for Gadaa leadership. As junior warriors they were purely fighters categorized into sections of cavalry, *lafoo* (soldiers) and *Buttuu* (special fighters). The members of this group continue undertaking military training of the earlier grade.

In short, it is the matter of chance for the culprit to survive after this kind of punishment. Many offenders are immediately died of this joint beating coupled with his regression and anxiety of exclusion from the entire society.

If these individuals are killed on the course of this cruel punishment the lineage is not alleged to ask for his *gumaa*. No one is responsible to pay blood price for such individual. This is because of two reasons. First, the act is generally agreed to be harmful for the entire community. Secondly, the intention behind accommodating his close lineage in the act of punishment might be to make sure that the individual is the one who has to be punished or even died. In the same way, they reflect that the behavior and/felony of the person is beyond their capacity; they are tired of dealing with the matter of the individual.

This is not the only circumstance in which ritual of purification is required. The close agnates also do not pay *gumaa* (blood price) in case of killing each other. For instance, an individual do not pay blood price when killing his own child. The clan of mother acts as the taker of *Gumaa*. Honey mead is prepared and sprayed on the victim's party and clothing of *bullukkoo* (white colored homemade cotton) follows. Simple ritual called *naqaa maraa* is followed to fulfill the requirement. *Naqaa* (verb form is *naquu*) refers to the act of preparing a honey mead and *maraa* (wrapped blanket) are used to explain coiling of *bullukkoo* around victim's or victims' parties body. In general, *naqaa maraa* represents simplicity of the procedure. In the same way, the one who killed donkey, sheep and horse terminate the reconciliation process by mead and *wayyaa* (*bullukkoo*).

This idea deviates from the observation of Bartles (1983:229). According to him, killing a man is a violation of the world-order as given by the creator. For this reason, any act of shedding human blood involves rites of purification as supernatural requirements in spite of the situation of killing. Killings which might not demand compensation by themselves need ritual of cleansing which defend against grave danger from both the slayer as well as his lineage.

Materials used in the execution of *qucaa* have deep cultural symbolisms. On the way of taking him to the place the offender is going to be tied, the elders flog him by *shabbeena*. A single *shabbeena* (whip), *baaltokkee* is used to ride a horse or mule and beat someone; when we talk about *shabbeena* we talk about beating.

The double or veiled one is called *alangee* which symbolizes ritual, judgement, discussion and proclaiming of law. The Arsii Oromo proverb goes '*Dubbiin alangeen dhumti; murtiin alangeen dhufiti*' which carries the approximate meaning of discussion is concluded by *alangee* and decision comes by *alangee* to indicate the role of *alangee* in deliberation. On every deliberation to announce the final decision *Gadaa* lawyers hit the earth by their *alangee*. In a similar way, when the topic of discussion is too complex which needs additional and elongated analysis elders postpone the deliberation by saying '*mee alangee irra kaayanna*' which means let us put *alangee* on this point of discussion. In this case it has both secular and ritual power. Even though *alangee* and *shabbeena* are physically similar, their very function and sign is different. The *Gadaa* leaders command elders to tie the feet and the hands of the offender against a tree.

After three times trial of correction and forgiveness, he will be put to death by beating his shoulder with stick of *baddana* (*balanites aegyptica*) which is put for this purpose. A big stick also will be put aside the offender so that whoever passes nearby will be requested to thrash him.

The question 'why *baddana* stick?' is interesting. According to Leus, 2006 *Baddana* is tree whose leave is relished by camels and goats, the oily edible date- sized fruits by people. It is not much used for firewood because it gives off an irritating smoke with an unpleasant smell, which can make one sick. It is taboo for the people of *qaalluu* clans who are professionally spitters (*warra tufaa*) for whom the camel itself is taboo. They can not even drink milk from a container that has been fumigated with *baddana*.

*Baddana* is known as the tree of hyena. And hyena does not break a kraal which is built by *baddana*; this is not only for its thorn but also for it has religious significance. That is why the study community says '*abbaan baddanaa baddana hin cabsu*' to mean 'the father of *baddanaa* (hyena) does not break *baddana* to hurt cattle'. On the other hand, while insulting the one who could not answer a riddle, children say '*baddana jala dhaabadhuu badiikee of gaafadhu*' which means standing under *baddana* ask yourself your misdeeds. In the same way, owl (*urunguu/jajjuu*) is chased by this tree when it comes near house and shouts for the fact that it is associated with bad fortune. Even followers of other religions other than *waaqeffannaa* consider this tree as a tree of devil.

From the above attitudes actions it seems plausible to say that *baddana* is abode of bad spirit. This tree is scattered and have long roots penetrating deep into earth to get scarce moisture. Its leaves are very small to minimize evaporation.



**Picture 2: Picture of *Baddana* Tree from Different Angles**

#### **4.3 Types of *Qucaa***

*Qucaa* takes a variety of forms. Depending on the aspects of punishment, there are three types of *qucaa*. The level of seriousness of the crime committed also comes into play. Accordingly, *qucaa* may take the type of terrifically beating (simple or first level), burying the body of the offender by leaving some parts of his body exhumed (second level) and killing (the third and serious one). Individuals who are caught and killed when stealing cattle at a mid night do not have *gumaa*; their case is treated by *qucaa* law.

##### **Terrifically beating:**

The offender is beaten with a *shabbeena* as a response to behavior that has been believed inappropriate to alter long term behavior. The offender is spanked by *shabbeena* in addition to beating him with rigid and thick sticks. Such type of *qucaa* involves beating on back seat, the soles of the feet, or on the back and sometimes involve minor cuts and bruises. It sometimes comprises flogging, whipping and tying. This form of *qucaa* is known for seriously thrashing and sometimes stripping naked. In general, in case of moral wrongdoings this type of *qucaa* is executed to prevent others from committing similar crimes.

**Burying:**

The second type of *qucaa* is burying the whole body of the offender by leaving his head unburied. To stop an unwanted behavior offenders are buried in front of many witnesses without causing serious physical injury. The wrongdoer passes five days in the hole. Such individuals are believed to show aggressive behaviors on the fifth day which shows his spiritual rehabilitation. Burying symbolically signals that the past personality of the culprit is dead and he is turned to another pure individual. The individual is reborn and his past behaviour is left in the hole. This is executed in order to bring a change of heart and character on the offender.

**Killing:**

Killing offenders is the final punishment for the most serious and repetitive crimes. The *Abbaa Gadaa* initiates the process of killing by beating on the joints of the offender and the *raaba* executes the killing. *Bokkuu* is the symbol of power. As a result, beating by *Bokkuu* indicates supremacy of gadaa laws. This penalty is designed to correct undesirable behaviors which interrupt the social equilibrium. This punishment is measured in terms of the satisfaction it produces for the large community and the interest it serves the overall society.

Leus (2006:467) similarly reported that *mudaammuddii*, traditional death penalty takes place once in every *Gadaa*. According to him, on the main pan-Borana meeting the most serious crime that had been committed during that *Gadaa* is discussed. Accordingly, having sex with unmarried girl (*caphana*), bugging an animal, mistreating a horse, killing a fellow Borana and all misdemeanors contravening *aadaa* results in such punishment. With regard to its implementation, the offender is beaten by *Bokkuu* (wooden scepter) on the neck and groin, the palms of his hands, and soles of his feet until he died.

#### 4.4 The Difference between *Qucaa* and *Gumaa*

There is considerable difference between *qucaa* and *gumaa*. *Gumaa* according to Dejene (2007) refers to blood price or compensation that follows homicide or serious bodily injuries. It is a mechanism of conflict resolution that the Oromo have practiced and still practicing to handle dispute cases that involve homicide and/or severe bodily damages.

The first place where the difference between *Qucaa* and blood price (*gumaa*) lies is that the act of *qucaa* is exclusively dependent on physical punishment of wrongdoers to the degree of killing. No one is responsible to pay offender's blood price if his soul is passed in his hands. What saves him from death is only his chance. When it comes to blood price however, it is about fine compensation and reconciliation with both *waaqa* and the slain's lineage. According to Dejene (2007) too this argument holds true. Murder is not only heinous act against the value of the society but also an offense against the law of the creator (*Waaqa*) that demands ritual reparation. Homicide is sin that is morally reprehensible and mystically dangerous.

Secondly, the law of blood price is applicable only on individuals who accept their case and want to be reconciled with the slain's party. *Qucaa* nevertheless is a law by which culprits who repeatedly commit offenses and who are problematic to the entire community are punished.

Thirdly, *gumaa* is a circumstance in which murderers and/or wrongdoers are assisted by all members of their lineage while *qucaa* is a decree by which usual criminals are beaten, buried half of their body and killed. Dejene (2007) also backs this idea. In *gumaa* blood price is paid by contributions from a clan or lineage of the killer. However, in practice, different sections of kinsmen of the killer, the affines, friends, neighbors, self-help association members non-kin to the slain also contribute. In addition, in the former times, a slayer could beg for contribution of blood money at market places where the victim's relatives could not get at him. The chain hanging on his hand marks such a begging. The chain shows that his hands have committed a serious offense and he is morally and

culturally under detention though he is physically free. Every body responds by contributing money.

According to my key informants, before taking the present modification, the *gumaa* of Oromo was applicable to any killing of human being. If one kills another man intentionally or accidentally he pays hundred cattle independently without the contribution of clan.

However, this problem has been aggravated because wealthy people were not obeying the rule. It was after this drawback is seen on the *gumaa* law that the *Gadaas* revisited it. Until recently too an individual who committed homicide pays the *gumaa* of hundred cattle. Dejene (2007) too confirms that some of the current practices indicate that the number of cattle for blood price compensation is hundred. Nevertheless, every thing contributed to the slain party is donated by entire lineage. Dejene (2007) again presents the same thing. Whatever its source, the male line is responsible to collect two third of the total, whereas the rest is covered by the mother's side. The two representatives in turn give the responsibility to the lineage leaders. People in the lineage are supposed to contribute as much money as requested through their lineage leaders. Failure to contribute has both secular and spiritual consequences. The reality of whether the act was accidental or planned also has a meaning.

Now days, *qucaa* which was a severe physical punishment is changed to fine payment. Depending on the degree of misdeed one has committed various degrees of punishments from cash to paying animals is requested.

There was/is strong culture promoting courageousness through killing wild beasts in order to be praised and to reach self-actualization. On the course of hunting big games therefore, the hunter may kill human being accidentally. Such unplanned killing is treated by *gumaa* law even though the slain party appeals to the *Gadaa* to punish the murderer by *qucaa*. *Qucaa* is not performed for every wrongdoing. In principle, the soul of dead person is finished by hundred cattle.

The normal ritual of *gumaa* is undertaken when the murderer comes back home. The inner most philosophy of making this ritual is that the offender has affected the interest of the creator additional to the interest of slain's lineage which can not be maintained by formal procedure of correcting the individual or administering punishment. Dejene (2007) when supporting this idea says that murder is not only dreadful act against the value of the society but also an offense opposite to the law of the creator (*Waaqa*) that demands ritual reparation. Killing is sin that is morally reprehensible and mystically dangerous. A man who has shed human blood is in a state of ritual impurity.

As a result, culturally it is not believed that peace can be restored by merely punishing individuals. A person can not enjoy peace individually. At the same time, the effect of certain conflict is not confined to individuals. Both peace and conflict are the matter of the community.

## **Chapter 5: *Mana Korsiiisuu***

### **5.1 The meaning of *Mana Korsiiisuu***

*Mana Korsiiisuu* came from two Oromo words '*mana*' (house) and '*korsiiisuu*' (forcing to mount). The phrase together has the meaning of forcing to mount house. According to Arsii Oromo, women are in charge of house; the word *mana* has the connotative meaning of woman. For instance, one does not ask man '*Manni kee eessa*' (where is your home?); people instead say '*Warri kee eessa?*' which roughly means 'where is your family?' In the same way '*mana walii kennuu*' which literally means 'giving house for each other' also connotes the circumstance of giving women for each other as a means of enjoying reciprocal sexual relationship. To put simply, the word '*mana*' in one way or another represents women. In short, *mana korsiiisuu* is the ritual of forcing relatives accused of having sexual relationship to mount house naked at the presence of all community members as a means of punishment and purification.

Decision will be passed on offenders who are found guilty of making sexual intercourse with a woman not appropriate for them. The culture has clearly put the penalty of such taboo. Therefore, one has to submit the act even if he is not seen during the act because concealing the impurity has diversified consequences. He is forced to mount a house at the presence of all community members unclothed. This ritual is used to purify and reintegrate the offender. Similarly, it deters other community member from doing the same offence.

### **5.2 Kinship and Incest Taboo among the Arsii Oromo**

I have tried to illustrate the working of kinship among the Arsii. Now I believe that it is fair to raise the very interrelated concept, incest. Incest is generally defined as sexual intercourse between two close relatives. Cultural universals have norms regarding who is considered suitable and unsuitable for sexual intercourse and marriage. Close relatives are excluded from being attached to sexual partner and committing incest is believed to bring misfortunes and outbreaks. In the society there are categories of relatives as father, mother, mother in law, father in law, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother,

*mana*(house), *balbala*(door), *warra*(nuclear family) or descent group, *ibidda* (hearth) and lineage. Each of these social unit and/or bond has their own peculiar identity and culturally defined social interactions revolve around this circle.

On the other hand, Westermarck effect theory does not seem plausible in Arsii Oromo. The theory locate the source of incest prohibition to the assumption that people who live in close domestic proximity during the first few years of their lives become desensitized to later sexual attraction. In the study area however incest taboo is regulated by only independent criteria that is kinship. Opposite to this assumption, youths of different clan confidently marry one another without bounding/restricting themselves to mere geographical proximity. Individuals of immediate village engage in marriage if their clan is different though they are brought up near each other.

Our every day interaction therefore is characterized by distance and restrictions. There is appropriate and inappropriate target for every thing we do and utter. One is intertwined with others through a variety of means. In case of this abomination, which is the grave impurity therefore, the moral pollution has to be cleansed or expiated by special ritual experts in order to appease the creator and ancestors who are believed to have been also offended.

Bartels (1983:208) too has clearly portrayed the Matchas' view of incest too. He has observed that incest is like shading one's own blood, which is heinous act and could only be cleansed through elaborated rituals of purification. As a result, the wrongdoers have to save themselves from serious penalties of the creator (*Waaqa*) by arranging extensive ritual of purification especially if forbidden marriage occurs. A child born to such a union would be unhealthy, lame, blind, moron, and would not grow up. The couple would be infected with leprosy or suffer early death.

My data from Arsii Oromo of Utaa Waayyuu too backs this examination. Marriage within relatives rarely happens for there is profound involvement of elders in marriage arrangement. Marriage is not only the issue of evaluating each other's wealth and loving each other; the central point of every marriage is making sure whether the couples are

appropriate to marry each other in which the knowledge of elders play pivotal role. Once it is established, it is impossible to dissolve marriage. Therefore, elaborated analysis of each and every matter is essential. Elders stress the idea that many present day marriages end in divorce for marriages are made by free will of the couple.

Each society designs its own rules for the smooth functioning of behaviors and decides when those rules have been violated and what to do about it. Similarly, the Arsii of *Waayyuu* has decisions which rule the entire cultural society which is highly interwoven with kinship system of the society. There is strong linkage between kinship and decisions to enforce norms. These days too, even though it is declining from time to time, the dwellers in the study area are governing themselves by these indigenous laws parallel with governmental regulations.

Oromo indigenous religion clearly plays a typical role in sanctioning and reinforcing public morality since *waaqa* is believed as the ultimate source of supernatural power and authority who never tolerate breaking cultural laws which are (and should be) the replica of his rule.

The community under study have clearly depicted that they believe that success in life, including the gift of off-spring, peace, wealth, health and all good things becomes complete when the community is intolerant of penalizing severe offences. Harmonious living is only real when the community strictly upholds and adhere customs and traditional norms of morality. Only such community could entertain a real hope of achieving the highly esteemed status of ancestor hood.

There are reasons for prohibiting incest taboo among the Arsii Oromo. Sexual relations between a man and his mother, daughter, mother in law, daughter, nephew, niece, uncle with their corresponding in-law is incestuous. More specifically, father-daughter and mother-son incest is the most horrible one for the reason that the relationship that is going to be created is shocking than others. An individual who enjoy sexual relationship with his mother for instance is going to give birth to his brother/sister which brings a long

lasting and shameful lineage. Contemporary science has also revealed that incest taboo potentially causes genetic problems (Bennett, L, 2002).

To be more specific, birth defects are often attributed to incest and modern medical evidences too clearly approve that children born from such kind of relationship are malformed. That is why it is not good anymore. People are forced to use it as a means of maintaining the family line (name) especially when they are barren. Kuwee (1997) observes the same thing. Oromo women who have no children are less respected and considered even more the stranger and outsider, *halaga*, because they "failed" to produce the son that would tie them to their husbands' clans.

In fact, incest refers to and associated with both sexual intercourse and marriage. Similar to other Oromo group, the Arsii is exogamous and patrilineal (trace descent through the male line) society. For a man, women in his clan are said to be his "sisters" while the women of another clan are his in-laws (*soddaa*). My question of why exogamy is preferred was followed by surprising response that '*firri silayyuu fira*' to mean 'kinship is already kinship'. This saying underlines the search of new kinship in the community for this law strengthens social solidarity by pushing individuals to quest for new line of kinship. The theory of Claude Lévi-Strauss associating incest and exogamy by which unrelated households or lineages form relationships through marriage, to strengthening social solidarity too fits in to this reality.

On the other hand, I did not found the dominant paradigm regarding marriage in Oromo in the study area. That is the notion supporting the idea that the groom's parents research back seven generations to make sure that the families are not related by blood before making any kind of contact does not seem plausible. Counting the number of lineage back to the seventh generation is not the determinant criterion for the central point of analysis is clan. The line of bride and groom may overlap on the eighth stage; still, if they are under one clan, the marriage that is going to be formed will be incestuous. Male and female of the same clan never marry each other even though their ancestry is very far from each other.

Qajeelaa Waatiroo, one of my key informants presents the similar view that the one who chooses to conceal himself after secretly doing this taboo faces many dangers. First of all it should be clear that such act happens behind closed doors. Therefore, the probability of catching these individuals red handed is very low or even not viable. Nevertheless, since every member of the society hold the view that the act is against the creators' law, culprits themselves publicize the case to the leaders to be ritually purified.

Individuals who prefer to hide the offense are believed to be crippled, barren, sterilized and their lineage does not continue. Additionally, all forms of disability challenges their futurity. His entire body is puffed up and he gives birth to disabled children. Therefore, individuals by their own initiative inform the leaders before they face these difficulties immediately after they are mocked by their sexual emotion. Disgusting identity crisis will challenge the child that is born because of incestuous relationship.

The product of inappropriate sexual relationship is always inappropriate child. Children born because of incestuous relationship those who are lucky to survive are wished/forced to die for they will be target of unfair treatment and scorn by the members of the society throughout their life.

Some anthropologists have explained incest avoidance in terms of ecological, demographic, and economic benefits of exogamy. According to (Cialdini and Trost, 1998:153) sibling incest taboos are a cultural universal, appearing in nearly all societies. Moreover, more recent genetic studies have found that there is a higher frequency of genetic deformity in the offspring of brother- sister mating than in the offspring of non-relatives. In this regard, this functionalist view point cultural transmission of a norm against sibling mating actually enhances reproductive success. This implies that efficient prohibition of incest is highly interwoven with the operation of every society.

Correspondingly, (Mause, 1991) states that the prevention of incest has been found in every known culture. That is to mean the taboo on incest within the immediate family is one of the few known cultural universals. However its degree, range and rationale may be

quite different. Generally, no known tribe has ever allowed incest and it has been a truism for cross-cultural studies ever since Durkheim and Westermarck's early books on the subject.

The culturally supported and scientifically proven reasons why incest taboo should be prohibited forced me to propose further scientifically investigations based on cultural explanation of dos and don'ts. Even though I could not get logical explanation on why and how incest taboo leads to psychological and biological defect from elders this is one of the spots on which belief and science supported each other.

Restrictions on certain types of sexual relations seem universal in terms of both its legal framework and tradition forbidding it. However, the reason behind why each society restricts incest taboo may vary whether it in the form of cultural or constitutional laws. Therefore, incest taboo in successive Ethiopian legal frameworks needs to be reviewed. Accordingly, moral reaction against such relationships was and/or is the strong motive behind the Ethiopian consecutive proclamations.

The 1957 Penal Code of Ethiopia (Article 533) too has undoubtedly put that abortion made on account of an exceptionally severe state of physical or mental distress, particularly following rape or incest, or because of acute poverty, entitled the offender to free mitigation of verdicts.

According to article 621(2A) of the 1996 E.C Criminal code of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), abortion is lawful in our country if it the pregnancy is a result of rape, incest, fetal defects (eugenics), the physical or mental health of the mother, economic reasons and reasons of age of the mother(Brian Clowes).

Ethiopian Revised Family (2000) Article 8 and 9 limits sexual intercourse between individuals related by consanguinity (relationship by blood) and affinity (kinship by marriage). Accordingly, the proscribed consanguinity restrictions involve marriage between persons related in the direct line between ascendants and descendants. Hence,

marriage between parent and child, grandparent and grandchild is prohibited. On the collateral (marriage) line, article 8/2 prohibits marriage between a man and his sister or aunt and also a woman and her brother or uncle. Similarly, under the 1960 Civil Code, marriage between ascendants and descendants as well as collaterals up to the 7th degree was forbidden.

### **5.3 The Relationship between *Woyyuu* and Incest Taboo**

Kinship is an organizing principle in societies. *Waaqa*, earth, *Gadaa*, *Qaalluu*, kinship/relative, in-laws, *Bokkuu*, *siinqee*, women, mother, elders and many others are *Woyyuu*. This is proclaimed on Gadaa assembly the breach of which results in punishments. By *Woyyuu* the *Arsii* mean something holy, respected and feared whether it is animate or inanimate including human being. The word is roughly equivalent to the concept known in other Oromo lands as *safuu*, a moral conception of reverence and sacredness. Falling into sexual relationship with kinship therefore is against the law of *woyyuu*.

Always when a man comes across a woman it is usual to ask a chain of questions. He asks her clan, the clan to which she is married, the place of her birth, and her family. These interrogations have their own purpose. First of all the woman may be close relative because the connection between community members is multifaceted. These affiliations can be rooted in blood relationships or it can be the one which come in to effect because of marriage. The second and implied intention is to make sure that whether the woman is appropriate or not to enjoy sexual partnership with him because his emotionality may force him to think unnecessary linkage.

Any violation of *safuu* of this sort is often described as '*Jilba malee deeme*' to literally mean he went without knee. The word *Jilba* in this context however has symbolic and cultural meaning. *Jilba malee deeme* means he went unlawfully as in '*Jilbaan fixadhu*' meaning follow the already proscribed law to settle your case. He made sexual intercourse with the woman culture do not allow for him. On the other hand, '*Isaan walii jilba*' means they are lovers or appropriate to enjoy sexual affiliation with one another.

Finally, *Jilba* (knee) is believed to be the place where semen is originated. One of my informants tried to convince me that individuals feel weariness in their knee after they make sexual intercourse; this is the indicator of the symbolic assumption that semen come from this essential part of our body. So, *Jilba malee deeme* in this context carries the connotation of acting against the law of sexual relationship by breaking law and enjoyed sexual intercourse with relative. This is punished by *mana korsisuu*.

#### **5.4 Concubinage as an Institution for Fulfilling Sexual Gratification**

Concubinage is designed to reduce incompatible interest of couples in marriage which in turn reduces and even eliminate divorce. This kind of relationship is not extramarital relationship but regarded as second form of formal marriage because it is neither short term contract nor secret and shameful act even though it does not follow the same principle of marriage. It is permanent and long term sexual partnership. Even though it is not publically discussed everybody knows that a given woman has *sanyoo* including her husband. The vice versa is also true.

This kind of relationship is commonly known as '*mana walii kennuu*' in the study area which literally means giving house for each other. However, it is to mean enjoying reciprocal love relationship. Women are dominant over all concern in the domain of home. This mutual relationship of love is meant to alleviate sexual displeasure for a usual reason behind committing incest is discontent from ones wife or husband. In the same manner, one can guess that there is strong connection between sexual disappointment, polygyny and the practice of concubinage from the fact that they go in line with one another.

The mechanism one has to follow to keep oneself from this immoral act is asking detailed information about the woman he comes across. This is highly prevalent when moving in different parts of *Arsii* villages. This condition implies that concubinage is highly prevalent in the community. Asking unfamiliar woman to narrate her biography is a widely known culture in *Arsii* Oromo to determine the sexual affiliation that might be created in the future. Her clan, birth place, family, *Luba* (if the Gadaa class of two males

is the same, their respective wives too enjoy the same status and category) is thoroughly investigated in order to clearly depict the boundary and distance between them.

The serious form of incest in *Arsii* is when individuals (either males or females) take pleasure in sexual relationship with their immediate father, mother, child, grandfather and grandmother.

In relation to this, there are five Gadaa classes in *Arsii* Oromo. Brother of ones father is regarded as a second father. The bride an individual marry is a child of his father's brother (*wasiila*). Peoples categorized under the same Luba (members of the ruling group) are regarded as relatives. As a result, they never intermarry one another. One thing to be understood when I say the Luba of woman is asked I mean the Luba of her husband. She directly enjoys her husband's *Luba* from her wedding day on. Husbands who are in the same Luba and/or *gogeessa* take each other's wife as relative regardless of their blood relation.

For instance, the Gadaa of *Oliyyee* is *bultuma*. The Gadaa of *daallee* too is *bultuma*. Genealogically, they are quite far from each other; nonetheless, husbands in both Gadaa do not select their mate/concubine from each other. If the father of X is regarded as the father of Y (because their *Luba* and/or *gogeessa* is the same), the Y respect the wife of X for she is considered as his mother.

### **5.5 The Procedure of *Mana Korsiiisuu* Ritual**

The ritual of *mana korsiiisuu* for instance has its own law and procedures. An extensive prescribed order is made on the day of this ritual. *Mana korsiiisuu* reintegrating ritual is surrounded by many religious symbols. Both the wrongdoers (the woman and the man) are forced to mount a house naked. First, she mounts the house then the man follows her.

The house is of the woman for such acts most of the time take place in her house. He is forced to touch her private part repetitively by duck (big fat tail) of the sheep from beginning to end until they come down to the earth. This is supported by the humiliation they face from the community in which they live in general and their neighbors, relatives,

families and friends in particular. Especially children laugh at them even though matured individuals fear even to witness this shameful event. Even though it is the responsibility of all members of the society to witness the punishment, many individuals are reluctant to see the full incident. Individuals choose to cover their eyes not to observe this extreme degradation.

Touching of female organ by dock of sheep which seems like male sex organ at the presence of the multitude is the representation of making shocking sexual intercourse with the woman. The reason behind unclothing them while others witness on the other hand is to disclose that the individuals do not have any shadow of norms, moral code. Not only that the act of remaining naked is to indicate that they seem animal which do not care about being naked. It is the worst of all wrongdoings to go naked body which is the complete deviation from the norms of the community. On the other hand, fixing dock of sheep to the backsides of the culprits symbolically represents that they acted as animals; only animals have a tail or dock. This act therefore is to indicate that the offenders are making sexual intercourse at the presence of others as animals. They are shameless for they did not respect the distance between one another as animals.

Individuals who are identified after making sexual intercourse with their relatives are marked by the term *haraamuu*, incest. If the common distance between relatives is broken and incest is committed, individuals involved in the wrongdoing are mounted house.

The *jaala* (the most feared and respected person for women) cover their naked body immediately by cloth to show that they are hereafter not exposed to immorality. After this ritual is observed, the harmony between the creator and creatures is kept.

Washing of their body is the symbol of rebirth for them. After they passed through this sour episode they are regarded as completely another person because their impurity is eroded with their past personality. They climb the house by western direction and

descend by eastern direction. Individuals who witness this happening never think committing such act let alone involving oneself in such wrongdoing.

After they are reborn, they are reconciled to *Waaqa* (creator), *lafa* (earth) and the community. Enjoying sexual gratification with ones mother is a serious form of incest. An individual is said to be '*kobaaye*' when he make sexual intercourse with his relatives. The same term is used to express the man who makes sexual relationship with his mother. It can be the real mother or the one who is regarded as a mother because of *Gadaa* structure.

*Gudeeda* (the upper inner part of the thigh) is thoroughly bathed with special sense because it represents genitals. *Gudeeduu* means raping. '*Inni gudeeda kiyyaa bahe*' means 'he was born from me'. On the woman's part too remnant of males' semen is ejaculated on her groin which is polluted with impurity. In the same way, males swear by touching their *gudeeda* by saying '*gudeedni kiyya hin dhalchin*' which means 'let my *gudeeda* never give birth' while women do it by touching their breast followed by *harmi kiyya aanan hin ba'in* meaning let my breast never produce milk. Therefore, one can simply understand that each of them are the central in fertility.

It is after this dreadful episode that the *jaala* (may be approximately translated to English word 'escort') washes both offenders by honey mead. Mead (honey wine) in Arsii Oromoo is believed to bring social cohesion. Immediately after they come to earth, both wrongdoers are washed by honey mead and cover their body by clothe prepared by *jaala*. The washing of body by honey mead represents the act of making their bodies delicious for honey mead is very aromatic and flavorful. It represents bathing of the body that was filthy by this mouth-watering mixture.

Before this ritual their body is believed to be tasteless and complete dirty. Additionally it is a sort of wish/expectation from the offender to be tasty like honey in his left journey of life. Covering or wrapping their body by cloth on the other hand implies that they were formerly prone to troubles which were represented by their nakedness. The two *Abbaa*

*bokkuus* (during power transfer ceremony) also touch each other with mead. In this context, mead represents the hope of during the reign of the incoming year of rule for the *Abbaa Gadaa* in particular and wish of embellishment for the community in the following eight years. This act takes its meaning from the very idea of tastefulness of mead.

The sheep that is slaughtered is the property of the offender because it is part and parcel of the punishment. Until the expiation is done, the entire community (and not only the individuals directly involved), stood a real and imminent danger of suffering a disaster.

It is seen on the part of the woman involved as great deceit and disrespect for her husband, and on the part of the man as a violation on the personal life of another man. The man is required to apologize to the woman's husband. Expression of regret is done on males side for such kind of questions are raised from them most of the time.

## **5.6 Social Actors in *Mana Korsiiisuu* Ritual**

### **5.6.1 *Shanoo***

*Shanoo* (representatives of the five *waayyuu* which includes *Haballoosa*, *Habarnoosa*, *Weegee*, *Oliyyee*, *Abboosa*) of *waayyuu* actively participate on the process of purifying the wrongdoer.

It is apparent that the taste of mead which is a fermented drink from honey is mouth-watering. It is therefore with this logic that mead is assumed to make the future life of the offender tasty by washing his/her past impurity. Mead (honey wine), an intoxicating honey beer is believed to bring social cohesion and fertility.

Honey mead is common on every reconciliation stages. If one is refuse to accept an invitation from his relative because of various inconveniences the one who is refused obviously is thwarted. The one who refused commonly responds by using a saying '*Daadhii bookaa wayi naqxee?*' or have you prepared honey wine so that I missed your invitation? It got this importance and symbolism from the very idea that it is prepared from honey which is the symbol of tastiness. Therefore, one can simply deduce that preparing honey wine for rituals is an event of greatest significance. The ritual of cleansing is finalized by the following call-response proclamations as follows:

## Elder

*Gadaa fi gaadiin haa toltu*

Let the *Gadaa* and *Gaadii* be prosperous

*Nageenni nu waliin haa ta'u*

Peace be with us

*Nageenni lafa haa dhuunfatu*

May peace dominate the earth

*Hamtuun nurraa haa fagaattu*

May trouble far from us

*Waaqni dhibeerraa nu haa baraaru*

May *Waaqa* make us free from illness

*Lafti haa magariitu*

Let the land may continue to be green

*Maddaa margi nagaa haa ta'u*

Let pasture and water well be in peace

*Qe'ee fi re'een nagaa haa ta'u*

Let the domicile and goat be in peace

*Kobaayaan hirmii ba'i*

Let the offender be out of incest

*Xuraawaan xurii bayi*

Let the offender be out of impurity

*Kobaayaa gudeedi haa qulqullaa'u*

Let the impure (the male) be purified

*Kobooftuu gudeedi haa qulqullaa'u*

Let the impure (the female) be cleansed

*Qaccee keenna nu barsiisi*

Make us know our relatives

*Ka itti deemu akka daymaa haa mi'aawu*

May your future be sweet as this honey mead

*Gaaddisi kun haa milkooftu*

## Chorus

Haa toltu

May it be

Haa ta'u

May it be

Haa dhuunfatu

May it be

Haa fagaattu

May it be

Haa baraaru

May it be

Haa magariitu

May it be

Nagaa haa ta'u

May it be

Nagaa haa ta'u

May it be

Hirmii ba'i

May it be

Xurii bayi

May it be

Haa qulqullaa'u

May it be

Haa qulqullaa'u

May it be

Nu barsiisi

May it be

Haa mi'aawu

May it be

Haa milkooftu

Help us succeed in this meeting

*Kun toltuudha*

This is good

May it be

*Haa qabatu*

Let it be pertained

The above blessing is done simultaneously with washing the body of the culprit by honey mead. *Gaadii* is a rope used to tie legs of cow while milking or milking strap. It is used to hobble the back legs of a cow when she is being milked. In this blessing however, *gaadii* represents cows for the presence of *gaadii* implies the presence of cows and milk. Every member of the community including bride (*misirroo*) attends the occasion. It is better to be penalized by capital punishment or killed rather than testing this bitter experience.

Upon completion of the deliberation, the wrongdoers are asked to testify their grave mistake by their mouth. To do so they are brought under *baddana*, a tree connected with punishment, misfortune and trouble. '*Baddana jala dhaabadhuu badii kee of gaafadhu*' or 'standing under *baddana* ask yourself your transgressions' get its meaning from this ritual. At this place, the offender report each pace of his past wrongdoings that are hiddenly performed and those witnessed by the community.

### **5.6.2 The Role of *Jaala* in *Mana Korsiiisuu* Ritual**

Above all *mana korsiiisuu* ritual takes place at the presence of *jaala* who is conceived as a second god for the married women. It is impossible to translate the word *jaala* for there is no English equivalent term. *Jaala* is a close relative of the groom (he should be from the same *balbala*) who is selected as the second father of the couple. *Jaala* is one and feared than every body. Women fear him than their actual father-in-law (*abbiyyuu*) and they do not call his actual name. Especially *jaala* is responsible to address all problems and is in charge of them in the absence of the real father.

On the wedding day *jaala* churns/stir milk (which is regarded as trivial activity) to symbolize that he helps them in all directions including minor activities from that days on. Women never and ever enter their *jaala's* home; they even do not come across him. If

he goes to their house for some cases they prepare food in another's house and search for somebody who serves him.

People equate *jaala* with *waaqa* to express the reverence and fear of him. Disrespectful women are explained as '*Ta Waaqaan jaaloo jette ta jaalaan abboo jette*' which may roughly mean she is the woman who said *jaaloo* (*jaala*) to refer *waaqa* and *abboo*(you) to refer *jaala*. This clearly informs us that the woman has minimized the role of *waaqa* to that of human being; on the same move, saying 'you' to *jaala* is a serious offence and/or rudeness. In general *jaala* is highly respected.

In relation to this, *Jaala* and *Halangee* are among the important personnel in marriage ceremony. *Halangee* is known as *waarsaa* in other Oromo lands. Both *halangee* and *jaala* accompany the couple on the wedding day. *Jaala* represents father-in-law while *Halangee* represents the husband and some times brother. He is *Halangee* who is responsible to address secret matters women fear to expose to all persons including issues related to sexual relationship with their husband. When there is a sort of disappointment with regard to matters associated with sexual relationship, women secretly discuss with *halangee* so that the problem is resolved. *Halangees* act and behave as a husband to the extent of beating women in case of mistakes.

Once we have understood the place of *jaala*, it is appropriate to reveal his role in *mana korsiiisuu* ritual. Somewhere else in this thesis I have pointed out that the one eligible to wash the body of wrongdoers by honey mead and cover their body by clothe prepared is the *jaala*. His role as an important social actor too is derived from his relationship with the wrongdoers as well as the normative power of his status.

To conclude this chapter, one has to clearly identify *mana korsiiisuu* as a means of enforcing decision is rooted in the working of kinship and severity of incest. Institutions revolving sexual intercourse, the conception of *jaala*, *wayyuu* and *shanoo* needs to be addressed for they dynamically sway each other.

## ***Chapter 6: Barbadeessuu***

This chapter deals with one form of norm enforcing mechanisms of Arsii Oromo. To this effect, the context in which this form of punishment is utilized, main social actors involved in its implementation, happenings to be identified to decide whether an individual should be punished by this mechanism and stages of its implementation are addressed.

### **6.1 *Barbadeessuu* defined**

*Barbadeessuu* came from the noun ‘*barbadaa*’ which means a dead coal. Dead coal is not expected to revive and make light or heat again for it is dead for the last time. The one who is punished by *barbadeessuu* too never come back to humanity for he is absolutely damaged. To say differently, *barbadeessuu* is simply making barren or empty which lack every thing.

The same interpretation holds true for *awwaarkaasa*. *Awwaarkaasa* came from two Oromo words *awwara* (dust) and *kaasuu* (blow). Collectively it means blowing up a dust which signifies moving/removing the property of the wrongdoer as a motion air. It is noticeable that winds blow up at the place where there is no forest and full of dust.

A culprit who escapes under the *Bokkuu* after immediately witnessing that he/she has killed a man is reintegrated by fulfilling usual ritual, *gumaa*. The *Abbaa bokkuu* facilitate the process of bringing the two groups together. By the use of *gumaa* murderer cleanse his soul, acknowledge his misdeed and beg for pardon. Contrary to this, the one who escape or conceal himself rather than striving for reconciliation after killing human being is punished by *awwaarkaasa* or *barbadeessuu*. Even though compensation for a loss of life could not replace the lost life ruptured relations of parties in conflict is meant to be solidified.

The *bokkuu* of five *waayyuu* proclaim the offense to the multitude in detail. Every member of the society takes its part in confiscating and/or raiding livestock like cattle, goat, sheep and camel. If fire is set to his house, no body is accountable to extinguish it;

if his house is fallen on him he does not get positive response from the villagers. His house is razed and his crop are burnt and everything he owns is destroyed in cooperation to prevent further offences whether by the same person or by other group members; this discourages others from doing the same thing.

The above decision is officially declared by *Abbaa Bokkuus* to institutionally support and approve the punishment. Backslider hereafter would be regarded as the enemy of all people in the lineage despite the fact that they are born in the community or lineage; they are no more treated as community member.

## **6.2 Precondition of *Barbadeessuu***

*Barbadeessuu* and *sooddessuu* are interchangeably used to represent the idea of spoiling or messing up something. *Sooddessuu* therefore denotes destroying a given person/property without leaving any part of it. It is all about ruining things completely. *Sooddessa* is a law by which persons who commit serious and/repetitive crimes are penalized by completely annihilating his entire livelihood. '*Horiin midhaan sooddessite*' means for example the cattle have obliterated the crop completely. At first stage, three individuals are sent to him. If he refuse to accept the request five individuals are sent to him another day.

All these trials are made to warn him and that he is moving against the interest of the community in which he is living. They clearly underline that he has to submit the case to the *Gadaa* before taking any measure against him. The final examination whether the offender has changed his idea or not is undertaken by sending *lammii* (lineage). As we can understand from this process, the number of people involved in informing the mistake increases from first phase to the end. This entails that the community at large is accusing the offender and the punishment he is going to encounter will be cumulative.

On the other hand, if the killer blindly crosses a river without submitting the crime to the *Bokkuu* and his relatives he is *enemized*. The *Arsii* do not cross a river if the live of another *Arsii* is passed in his hands. Rather he is responsible to immediately inform the misdeed to the *waata*, *Bokkuu* and his lineage to start the process of reconciliation.

If one is caught by the effort of the community before submitting his own misdeed he is proclaimed as enemy and immediately punished by *awwaarkaasa*. It is only an enemy who never surrenders after killing persons. However if the culprit does not refute the committing of an offense and asks for pardon and purification, formal procedure of blood price payment will proceed.

### **6.3 *Barbadeessuu* and Situation of Killing**

Offenders who are not ready to escape to the *Gadaa* and hesitant to settle their case amicably by *seera Hambaa* (the law of lineage) faces the retribution of *awwaarkaasa*. Such chastisement is relevant to who do not enter *ona* (literally means empty house if not exactly the same) and hurried to remove spear from the dead person by which he pierced. More generally, one has to commit himself to save the life of the victim to his level best.

In the process of investigating the crime elders thoroughly analyze every pace of the crime for each incident happened subsequent to the act because it defines the decision that is going to be rendered. For example, they examine whether the killer has broken the spear on the dead man or not. Breaking the spear indicates that the murderer has seriously regretted of the act. Not only that but also, whether the killer has fallen on the dead immediately after the incident or escaped from him is also taken in to consideration. The one who runs away from the dead gave the victim to the vulture rather than calling upon the clan; one has to pull out the spear and scream loudly for assistance of other community members before running off to save his life from revenge. Pulling out the spear and leaving the dead person is only done on an enemy.

### **6.4 Stages of *Barbadeessuu***

*Barbadeessuu* takes three stages. These phases are confiscation, *ulee gosaa* (stick of clan) and exclusion. The severity of these stages of *barbadeessuu* is different. It starts by confiscation and concluded by complete exclusion of the offender.

#### **6.4.1 Confiscation**

In Arsii laws are of two types. The first one is the law by which the cases of individuals in a lineage are treated/seen. The second one is the law that is designed for their interaction with their neighbors. Accordingly, the law of backsliders is seen by the second one even though they are biologically a member of the group. The community in a complete agreement concurs to demolish his houses and fences, knock down pillar of his house (which symbolizes his life for the household always sit under *utubaa*), confiscate his family members, burn his home, uproot crops, seize his domestic animals immediately and demolish his kraal; his bull (seen as a symbol of fertility) is sterilized. This is institutionally legitimized amputation.

The community member compete one another to take away more cattle for they are with no one to control and own. Any body who come across the incident snatch the property of backsliders confidently. The member of his family are seized and mixed with other clan in order to free them from the crisis. At the same time this is made to completely marginalize the backslider even from his immediate family members.

All forms of marginalization are applied on backsliders. The community does not express/share grief if in case he dies during the time of exclusion. Not only that they do not bury the body. No one is allowed to enter his home or reach the place where he resides.

Adam Waatiroo, an expert of culture and tourism office of *Adaamii Tulluu* district also confirms that *Sooddessa* means confiscating of the whole property of wrongdoers. The entire community campaign against such individual to take away his affluence including animals including horses, camels, cattle, sheep, goat, and crop and every thing his property. Individuals are confiscated or loose their possessions if they are willing to continue their act of deviance.

It feels like death for any one so punished since such a person is regarded as an outcast. He/she would not be allowed to share in the life of the community. There would be no visits to the family, no exchange of greetings, no one would sell or buy from members of

the marginalized family. No one should enter his home to discuss every thing. The culprit is considered unfit to live in that society.

So severe is the punishment of ostracization, that every member of the community highly fears it, and would do every thing possible to avoid it. To put simply, the culprit is denied everything. Ostracizing an individual or group that has fragrantly disobeyed the community is thought to be the most severe punishment that could be meted out to any body. It does, on the other hand show the kind of tremendous power of the community.

#### **6.4.2 Ulee Gosaa**

After confiscation, the clan of offender is excluded from every decision making on behalf of the backslider. They have no vote and saying on every discussion and deliberations. It is at this marginalization time that the clan commences to decide punishing the offender by *ulee gosaa* which means stick of clan. By *ulee gosaa*, the clan whips the offender in order to show that his act is opposite to the interest of the clan. It is after *ulee gosaa* that the *Gadaa* comes to a decision to punish the individual by *muukessuu*.

It is organized when for instance youngsters disrespect their family, expose their family for difficulties, or mishandle the property of their family. When repeated advice from his family bears no fruit, they request the lineage to punish the backslider jointly. The lineage secretly arranges the punishment day and detains him early in the morning. If the backslider wants to approach them forcefully, they tie him with ropes. After tying him they cut *harcummee* (thin and wet stick) and put it beside him. It is unlawful to break teeth, blind eye and resulting serious bodily injuries.

Until the offender submits his misdeeds, they never free him; when he acknowledges his misdemeanors he prepares honey mead for the reconciliation session. On the day of reconciliation he carries a pot full of honey mead throughout the deliberation. After the discussion is concluded, elders allow him to put down the pot. His family sooner than any body sprays honey mead on his body by *irreessa*. For the offense has disappointed all the relatives the other lineage members follow. However, if he confesses the wrongdoing and admits for reconciliation the punishment is symbolically executed.

In general, after continuous trial is agreed to bear no fruit, his *gosa* is punished on his part. On the second step, his *lammii* is punished by various means of sanctions. This is implemented to ensure sustained collective responsibility.

#### **6.4.3. Muukessuu (Exclusion)**

*Muukessuu* by its very definition is avoiding any form of relationship with the one who is agreed to be completely deviant or out of the ordinary individual by his/her behavior or acts. For *Afaan Oromoo* speakers it is undemanding to understand that *muukessuu* means *muka taasisuu* or making an individual a *muka* (tree). *Hin mukaa'in* means talk, play or do not feel depressed. Trees, even though they have a soul/life they can not talk and interact. The same thing is true for an individual labeled as backslider. *Muukessuu* is the final and fierce form of punishment.

According to the head of Culture and tourism office of *Baatuu* town, kedir Abiti the wrongdoer who is accused of such wrongdoings categorized under *awwaarkaasa/barbadeessuu* is not allowed to sit under '*Gaaddisa hambaa*' literally meaning the shadow of lineage. That is to say he is not eligible to participate in any kind of discussion related to the affairs of the society.

He is completely excluded from using water wells for his cattle and enjoying market which are very central to the life of human being. The importance of the spring and water wells in Oromo particularity in the context of pastoralism is vital. Without them it is more than difficult to lead life which entirely revolves around cattle. Cattle are the source of every thing in the society. Therefore, forbidding such central things put the offender in a completely miserable condition. Generally, the backslider should not enjoy ritual and public space.

After all long processes of trials and deep forgiveness the law of *barbadeessuu* is applicable on wrongdoers because they are extremely deviant. What we can deduce from this final and heavy decision is that it is applicable when the society unanimously agrees on the role of such individuals in sustaining the peace and smooth functioning of the society. That means individuals who are decided to carry such harsh punishment are supposed to contribute nothing positive for the society rather than infecting the livelihood

of the community from which they are flourished. He/she is simply regarded as anti-social person.

Baxter (1978:151) presents similar view of the cases in which offenders face expulsion from the community. The formal way of excluding extreme deviants from *Nagaa Booranaa* is through a cursing (*abaarsa*) administered by *Gumii Gaayyoo*, general assembly. The *abaarsa* will exclude the recalcitrant from blessings and prayers, even from the exchange of any greetings from the whole Boorana community. An individual who defy the decision of leaders will be denied all social and ritual support from the whole of *Boorana*. In a pastoral life, where everything including water is collectively used and administered through the clan system, a person cannot survive.

Persons who are found during exchanging greeting and talking with offenders face similar exclusion as well. After a long time his lineage take initiative to reintegrate the backslider to the community. After making sure that the one who fell back into wrongdoing or a bad habit after an attempt to act in a better way is believed to learn from his mistake, the community permits the process of reintegration. The individual is restored to the existing community long after he is regarded as disparate. If the culprit is not ready to follow the usual practice of paying blood price, he/she is enemized. This is applicable for an individual, clan or a group. This custom has contributed for the expansion of the Oromo as well. The next story confirms that the principle of *muukessuu* has ocontributed a lot for the expansion of Oromo in to different directions.

There is a clan called *Heeban Shanan*. The five *Heeban* are *Gujii*, *Dhuggoo*, *Heebanoo*, *Gambooo*, and *Daawwee*. Except *Gujii* the four *Heeban* still are located in the study area. The eldest son of *Heeban* is *Gujii*. Even though we are under the general umbrella of *oromummaa* (oromoness) we enemized the *Gujii* before we are united. Once upon a time, the children of *Gujii*, *Arsii* and *Borana* used to play *korboo* (wooden wheel). On the course of this, the child from *Gujii* speared the one from *Arsii* unintentionally. By playing *korboo*, children compete spearing through its center to develop the talent of war by practicing of piercing a moving thing by *xilloo* (sharpened wooden spear). The child from *Gujii* was quite strong than the other two. The child from *Arsii* was immediately dead.

The child from *Gujii* then was chased and pierced though he survived. The *Gujii* was asked to pay blood price. The *Gujii* argued not to pay fine since his child too was suffered a lot. He asked to see both cases of killing and enduring by balancing the weight. He strongly refused the decision. It was after several trial of making peace that *Gujii* was barred and told that he has no right to complain the *Arsii*. The *Gujii* as a group could not take part in community affairs including meetings. He fled from the place after assuring that he was entirely isolated from the group. The *Gujii* was denied rights and benefits as a group.

In general, *muukesuu* have dreadful mental and emotional consequence. The underlying principle behind *barbadeessuu* is to correct their future behaviours and deterrence for others so as to create an environment of peace.

### **6.5 The Role of *Waata* in Restoring Peace**

The *waata* from the perspectives of *Arsii* Oromo are the despised group. The widely traced narrative regarding their despised status is quite similar in *Arsii* Oromo. That is, they used to be prosperous than every body. They started competing with *waaqa* for all human being was not equal with them in terms of wealth. By feeling confident of their affluence, they invited *Waaqa* to provide him whatever he wants. The *Waaqa* disappointed by them and ruined all their wealth. Their cows (today's hippopotamus from which they prepare whip) fled to water bodies. That is why they eat hippopotamus today. They do not have cattle; they eat butter and other livelihood forms by begging the proper *Arsii*. They make their living by hunting, blacksmith, pottery and weaving.

At the same time they are equated with *Waaqa*. An individual facing difficulties is usually asked '*Waaqa moo waatatu si abaare*'? which exactly means who cursed you, *Waaqa* or *Waata*? In this regard, the *Waata* are regarded as supernatural being and concomitantly derided in their interaction with *Arsii*. Therefore, the origin and contradictory status of the *Waata* deserves further and detailed research. I am not really satisfied with the explanation elders provided me on the point that they located the

genealogy of *Waata* in *Arsii* Oromoo for similar rationalizations are found in other Oromo lands.

Under a normal circumstance, the one whose hands became dirty of killing somebody must instantaneously report the case to the lineage. When *Arsii* kill another *Arsii*, he takes the initiative of punishing himself before every body to announce and pledge that he had committed a weighty mistake. He travels to the place where no one reaches or difficult to live in. The assassin marches long distances to seek the support of his clan. He drinks water by a wooden pot which is heavy to carry to show that he is under a heavy weight to undertake his daily life. In addition to that, no body shares home utensils with him.

Even though the *Waata* are not allowed to intermarry with *Arsii*, no ritual takes place without their involvement. They are considered to be an eldest clan and possess especial power. The slayer immediately enters *Ona* (an empty house), *goda* (cave) or river to show his very misdemeanor. The *Waata* arrives there and takes them from one of these places to begin the official reconciliation process. He pays a bull. The *Waata* after shaving the eyebrow, hair and public hair of the lawbreaker handovers him to the *Abbaa Gadaa*. This act of shearing symbolizes the rebirth of the culprit.

After doing all these pre-requisites the *Waata* present him to the *Abbaa Bokkuu* by taking/owning the previous cloth of the offender which is impure. After that, the *Abbaa Gadaa/Bokkuu* testifies that the culprit is free from now onward for he has fulfilled all necessary requirements.

### **6.6 Reintegration of Offenders after *Barbadeessuu***

The reintegration of the backslider therefore is assured by the proclamation that allows him using water wells/spring (*Malkaa*), enjoying market, and freed him to take a fire from neighbors by *Gadaa* leaders. The reconciliation process is concluded by reintegrating (*Amboomsuu/arsoomsuu*) the assassin to the pure *Arsii*.

## **Chapter 7: Changes and Continuities Norm enforcing Mechanisms Undergone**

In the preceding discussions attempts have been made to explore and analyze traditional forms of norm enforcing mechanisms in general and *qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu* in particular albeit in a changing environment. As a result, it is importantly vital to stress continuities and changes in Oromo norm enforcements. Change can be triggered by a number of reasons; it is not attributed to a single independent variable. Many factors have induced these alterations.

As a result, this study has given due consideration to the changes (with their resultant factors) that norm enforcing mechanisms of the Oromo has undergone. The first and most important variable is religion for the reason that it takes a central place in defining social life, differentiating right from wrong and things we perform in our every day discourse. Religious belief and practice are vital to all aspects of life and influence the way people live their everyday lives. This view though contradictory was held by several FGD discussants.

After the Gadaa leaders meticulously explained what indigenous culture say that the representatives from court, police and prosecutors requested them to amend laws related to *mana korsiiisuu*. The victims (offenders) may be psychologically embarrassed even to the extent of mental retardation. Therefore, they probed them to device less cruel form of punishment to reform and restore such criminals.

Accordingly, cultural leaders suggested that the *shanoo* (the five representatives from each sub-lineage) spray honey wine on their body. And ordure (*mi'a garaa*) and duck of the slaughtered sheep is put between the wrongdoers are asked to cuddle it. This is done to make this kind of relationship distressing in the future life of the individuals. The back of the culprit touch each other to symbolize that the individuals go in opposite direction in their innermost intention from that day onwards.

This means, the offenders are ordered to turn back against each other while sleeping to connote their future relation regarding sexual intercourse is entirely undeserved. The administrators told them the one which fits in to their interest. The *Ittillee* (hide made from animal skin used for sleeping on) on which they became dirty is stretched and incestuous team sleep on it. *Itillee* according to Ton Leus (2006:358) is a tanned and trimmed cowhide, with the hair still on, used as a sleeping mat, put on the framework of branches that make the bed. From that day on they are returned to *wayyooma*, the state of respecting and fearing each other.

The officials accepted this less violent mechanism. After she is forced to climb a house she never returns to humanity. It is completely inappropriate in the eyes of formal law. We surrendered and proposed the one which fit in to the existing constitution. They unanimously told us that the woman who experienced this tragic event will by no means give birth to a child again.

The officials told the leaders that the eyes of the multitude are not a simple punishment. Elders too really confirmed that we have witnessed such setback from our experience. There was no body who procreated in the middle of who were punished by *mana korsiiisuu*. What can be understood from the above circumstance is that today their role is confined to complementing government's efforts in sustaining peace.

For instance, today there is no suitable condition for *muukessuu*. Most of the time, they are punished by fine. Criminals are requested to serve a bull for the multitude. Cultural leaders put short term and simple sanctions and push them to fulfill the requirement in short period of time. If it seems beyond their capacity they report to the government to take necessary action on them. Their power today is not full-fledged; they successfully undertake their decision if and only if governmental structures back them. Nonetheless, government selectively interferes in such matters; this means government support and approves their decision when the crime is believed to affect his interest too. Large percentage of power rests in the hand of government. They are not allowed to marginalize individuals.

The interview data indicated that now full authority of administering the country is in the hands of government. If the, elders want to run the culture in a full-fledged manner they have a fear of confronting with government. They contend that they are not well versed in the knowledge of the current constitution of the country. Therefore, they fear to confidently implement the cultural laws for it may contradict with government's intention. Now it is completely forbidden to apply *qucaa*. The only independent organ to identify crime and punish criminals is government. It is a government who takes criminals to correctional centers. Criminals are taken to jail and provided with basic necessities and prevented from his personal career to learn from his past misdeed.

*Qucaa* can not be implemented if *Gadaa* is not fully operational. In case of serious crimes like killing, the government has clearly separated his role as well as the autonomy of community elders. Accordingly, the act is immediately reported to officials and the killer is put under control. Necessary measure is taken on the killer by following formal justice administration through court system. The role of cultural leaders on the other hand is limited to restoring peace between the groups in feud.

The final modification of Arsii Gadaa law was taken place during last six years. The proclamation was done at the presence of government officials. It was at this time that *qucaa* and *barbadeessuu* was represented by fine since there was an assumption from government that the act is against human right. Currently, human right advocates contend that nobody has the right to afflict pain on another human in a sense that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (UDHR, 1948: article 5). At present as a result, an offender is requested to pay a bull so that he is forced to feed the multitude. Generally, today these norm enforcing mechanisms are merely rhetorical implementation of laws and measures.

## Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusion

All forms of norm enforcing mechanisms I have tried to demonstrate above are meant to prevent offenders from committing any more crimes and to create a rapport with creator who does not like any type of wrongdoings. The general purpose of these physical penalties is to reform the behavior of the wrongdoers rather than punishment of the body. Anyone who disobeys proclaimed rules and regulations is treated appropriately. The need to build and promote an atmosphere of peace and mutual understanding is realized through these mechanisms. Efforts of sustaining peace can not be realized unless they are supported by indigenous culture of peace nourishment.

Indigenous forms of peace maintenance are participatory and are deep rooted in the heart of the community since it is their own making. This raises the question of whether both legal frameworks are competing with each other or complementing one another.

Kinship verifies the way the *Arsii* Oromo interact among themselves and others. *Mana korsiiisuu* punishment and ritual of purification is done when individuals make love with no sense of shame with their relatives. It is a real cure for the incestuous relationship between relatives which is becoming rampant in different parts of our world which is often attributed to lack of self control. These serious moral breaches are believed to destabilize the totality peace and harmony that should prevail in the society.

The criminal person therefore, expects severe punishment from the architect of morality, *Waaqa* not only from human beings. These all rituals are meant to protect and promote the community peace and harmony. They successfully reintegrate offenders back into their communities without re-offending.

Preventing the act and mentality of revenge from the group whose member is murdered rests on the shoulder of traditional leaders to pay blood price so as to calm down the outlook of retribution. Traditional leaders are not satisfied by putting killers in the

correctional centre. That is why they purify killers after they have finished the term of their punishment in correctional centre.

With regard to the purpose of norm enforcements, they are done for many purposes. The first and the most important rationale of these rituals is to restore the equilibrium that was disturbed by sinful acts. By this I mean the quest for peace and harmony has been at the center of this mechanism of norm enforcements. Secondly, it is executed to let others avoid themselves from similar fault. The third and final reason is to reform the behaviors of the offenders so that they become new and pure individuals who are free from this crime. These punishment however is executed not only for the mere punishment of the wrongdoer but also to maintain social order and enable the offender to become productive member of community. In line with this, the conduct of the offender is denounced.

According to *Arsii* law *qucaa* is applicable on individuals who kill human being and disturb order illegitimately. For the Oromo, *waaqa* is the source of peace; that is why the value for peace is worth. One of the main purposes of sacrifices and offerings for that reason is to maintain the harmonious relationship with the creator. Without peace, nothing good is impossible; peace is source of progress and fullness of life. At the absence of peace, it is impossible to procreate, conceive, and reproduce.

What takes an individual to the punishment of *qucaa* is not mere act of these wrongdoings but denial of committing them. His misdeed is told him one by one. An offender refusing the *Shanacha* who is sent to inform his wrongdoing has no more pardon. Because *Shanacha* are experts of history, law and morality of the society and gifted with interpreting this knowledge to each wrongdoings; above all, they are well versed in Gadaa laws.

Indeed these norm enforcing mechanisms can be reasonably seen as strategy of sustaining peace. Such brutal punishments too are meant to ensure and sustain community peace. Source of *qucaa* is therefore from this vital importance and value of peace for the person

is supposed to learn to change his habit and expectantly become a truthful member of society. Killing of an individual, cheating, lying, disrespect, dishonesty and inflicting harm on natural environment all are antithesis to peace.

There are varieties of laws for punishing backsliders among the Oromo. These strict laws are proclaimed to punish members of the society who are departed from the norm of the public at large. *Qucaa*, *mana korsiiisuu* and *barbadeessuu* are among the important form of norm enforcing mechanisms among the Arsii Oromo. All these physical punishments were taking place when Gadaa was fully operational. Today, peace is broken at an alarming rate because secret crimes are not addressed.

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**Picture 3: Picture of FGD Sessions**



**Picture 4: List and Pictures of key Informants**



**Figure 5: List of Key Informants from Left to Right:**

1. Usheexxee Tushaa (knowledgeable elder)
2. Bariisoo Abbittii (knowledgeable elder, *ayyaantuu*)
3. Sh/Musxafaa Kadiir (ex-Abbaa Gadaa)
4. Waddeessoo Godaanaa (knowledgeable elder)
5. Badhaanee Waaqoo (knowledgeable elder)
6. Hamburroo Hirkisoo (semi-retired elder)
7. Hamdinoo Guyyee (Head of Adaamii Tulluu District Culture and Tourism Office)

8. Qajeelaa Waatiroo (Current Abbaa Gadaa of Waayyuu)
9. Saafawoo Shaalee (Head of Baatuu Town Culture and Tourism Office)
10. Waariyoo Ayyaanoo (knowledgeable elder)
11. Dawaanoo Ganamoo (Time Reckoning Expert)
12. Heedatoo Guyyee (knowledgeable elder)